THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *
1053
495

ADONIA,

A

DESULTORY STORY.

Printed by T. Plummer, Seething-Lane.

[redacted]

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[illegible]

A

DESULTORY STORY,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

INSCRIBED, BY PERMISSION, TO

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUGH.

VOL. IV.

495

There is a kind of justice which a man ought to observe towards himself, even should he exist solitary on the earth: he should govern all his affections and habits, that he may be enslaved by none.

MADAME ROLAND.

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ADONIA.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

495

CHAP. XXXII.

Alas! alas! that so bright a moon should ever be hidden by clouds!

PERSIAN MSS

NEXT morning Adonia took Ferdinand to see Annette, being anxious to inquire after the health of her old grandfather; who, having found himself unwell, had requested to have Annette home again, as all apprehension of Grybton was hushed by his known return to Paris; and it was now about a fortnight since she had taken

leave of her kind and beloved benefactress, and returned to her former charge of watching the declining hours of her venerable parent. The day was cold and lowering, and the whistling North blast foretold the approach of winter. The young party, however, determined on walking; and the Marchioness promised to join them at the cottage in about an hour, and bring them home in her carriage.

The road was strewed with the discoloured leaves of autumn; the birds had almost ceased their songs, save now and then a few solitary notes that seemed a requiem to the departed season; and the atmosphere, heavy with clouds, threw a chill and dusky shadow over the lately-smiling landscape. "We should have done well, had we followed the Marchioness's first advice, and taken the carriage with us," said Johanna, shivering and quickening her pace. "I am astonished

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to see you look so cold," said Ferdinand, who was in no disposition himself to feel cold or any other inconvenience.—" Indeed I am amazed that her English constitution should affect to shudder at the cold of Languedoc," said Adonia.—" For my part, I think it the very day of all others for a long walk."—What was the colour of the landscape to them, whose hearts were clothed in the warm hues of summer? As they proceeded, Adonia gave Ferdinand an animated description of Annette's uncommon beauty, her artless simplicity, and the grateful and affectionate feelings of her heart. " She will so overpower us with her artless expressions of gratitude and pleasure!" said she, " that I almost dread to encounter the dear girl, or to think of parting from her again; and then she will look at you, St. Loudon, with such a timid blushing air, as if she took you for another Grybton. Take my word for it,

however, she will not think you half so handsome as her first favorite!"

They now came in sight of the hamlet, and Johanna instinctively shuddered at the desolate contrast, now every where presented, to the gaiety and gladness which had pervaded the same scene when they had first visited it. Gaiety had forsaken the hamlet-green; the sun no longer afforded it warmth, nor the trees a shade to screen it from the blast that scattered their withered leaves. The doors of the cottages were all shut, and not a peasant was to be seen either at work in the vineyard or crossing the distant fields. As they drew near to old Anselm's cottage, they saw the windows closed, and no smoke issued from the clay-built chimney. "What is the meaning of this?" said Adonia gaily: "one might forgive poor Anselm for lighting his fire on such a day, though *your* shiverings, Johanna, are insupportable." They then knocked;

but

but no answer being returned, they tried the latch, and were surprised to find the door locked. After several fruitless efforts to make themselves heard, they proceeded on to the next cottage, the door of which was opened by a middle-aged woman of decent but melancholy appearance, who, immediately recognizing the young ladies as Annette's benefactresses, civilly invited them to walk in and rest themselves. "But first tell us how old Anselm does, and where he has hid himself?" cried the still-unsuspecting Adonia. "Alas! my lady, you do not know then?—Poor Anselm was buried three days ago!" Adonia was thunderstruck; and she felt as if she had been guilty of the most unpardonable levity in the style of her inadvertent questions; a deep blush died her cheek, and tears rushed to her eyes. "But where then is Annette?" exclaimed Johanna, with alarmed quickness. "Is it possible that you have not heard?" replied the woman,

reddening and shaking her head. "Good heaven! what has happened to her!" exclaimed Adonia and Johanna together. "She does not deserve that you should pity her!" cried the woman, with a sort of ferocity kindling on her face. "Shameless unfeeling wretch! to forsake her poor grandfather, who doated on her so, when he lay sick in bed!—I will tell you what she did, ladies; she went off with that foreign gentleman whom you took so much pains to rescue her from; and what then had she to expect but what has happened? Old Anselm broke his heart, and died!" "Gracious powers!" cried Johanna, shuddering, "a fortnight ago this girl was innocent and happy!" Amazement, grief and disappointment, struggled by turns in Adonia's mind. She recollected with horror Annette's eagerness to be instructed in the English language, and her own pleasure in assisting to teach her. While she had imagined herself contributing to her usefulness, she was administering

ing to her ruin!—And yet, after some minutes of calmer reflection, the girl's artlessness and simplicity, her unaffected modesty, her grateful and constant acknowledgements of the kindness of her benefactresses, the glow of delight with which her heart had embraced the expectation of rendering herself able to support her grandfather in affluence, by the fruits of her honest industry, and the earnestness with which she had applied herself to her new acquirements,—all these pressed themselves upon Adonia's remembrance in fair and artless colours, and she decided in her own mind, that it would be the height of injustice to charge Annette with any error but imprudence, which from her innocent simplicity could scarcely be deemed a fault. The testimony of their hostess, however, was little calculated to encourage this lenity. She was of a blunt and honest nature, and had no allowances to make for the difference between guilt and imprudence. She ad-

 verted

verted to effects, not causes; and deeply exasperated against Annette, she regarded her in no other light but as the instrument of her own ruin, and her grandfather's death.

The unfortunate girl had only returned to the hamlet about a week, when Grybton again made his appearance there, disguised as a peasant, and without any companion. He had subdued her fears by the respectful deference of his deportment, and softened her heart by his pretended despair. After a long interview, which was rendered affecting and impressive by every artifice of experienced seduction, he had left her gentle bosom a prey to the most corrosive distress; occasioned equally by the struggles of indignant virtue, and the new-kindled affections of a heart which was ill-formed to resist the importunities of a tenderness of such apparent fervor and refinement. With many tears and sighs she then flew to this

woman,

woman, (who was her aunt,) and related all the particulars of this dangerous meeting; but, instead of consolatory advice or affectionate sympathy, she received only reproaches for her weakness, and the most bitter denunciations of vengeance against the slightest deviation from her duty. Again and again he had been seen to visit her in the same manner; but now Annette no longer opened her bosom in confidence to the woman from whom she had received nothing but severity and vulgar reproach; and, though she still pursued her usual occupations with alacrity, and betrayed no distaste of a manner of living which her residence at the Marchioness's house might perhaps have taught her to repine at, she was often surprised weeping, and her whole appearance was marked by deep dejection of heart. Her aunt did not once doubt her innocence, though she had so severely chidden her weakness; but she kept a watchful eye over her; and one morning

early she missed her. She immediately took the path leading to the high road, and there she beheld, for the last time, the infatuated girl just as Mr. Grybton was lifting her into a carriage, into which he immediately followed her, and they drove off towards —— with the rapidity of lightning.

All these circumstances her aunt faithfully related, neither concealing her own severity, which she still continued to think right, nor attempting by any display of sensibility to engage the compassion of her auditors towards herself; though she had lost an affectionate father, hurried to the grave by the unexpected shock of his darling's ingratitude; and though by his death she and her husband were in danger of losing the little rented property which had hitherto supported the members of Anselm's family in comfort and content. "I wish her no ill," said the woman, as the young ladies would

have

have endeavoured to soften her indignation, and palliate Annette's error. "Poor wretch! she will find sorrow enough in reflection, when shame overtakes her! but I am grieved to think, ladies, that your kindness and partiality should have been thrown away on an ungrateful wanton! I am ashamed that any of our family could make you such a return. Till now we had no reproach,—till now we were happy!" And, in spite of her efforts to struggle against nature, the prospect of want and desolation staring her in the face,—the retrospective glance, which pictured her venerable father alive and cheerful, with peace and contentment smiling around him,—quite overpowered her, and she burst into tears. But her tears lasted only for a moment; they were extorted more by shame and anger than by tenderness; for her coarse sun-burnt cheek had seldom felt the drops of pity or of love; and she turned from the disgraceful subject with the same air of grave com-

posure with which she had first met her visitors.

Apologizing for having all this time neglected to offer some refreshment, a table was immediately spread out, with all the neat simplicity of old Anselm's; at which she entreated them to partake. They sat down before it in compliment to her hospitality, but none of them could eat. Adonia's tears flowed unrestrained. Johanna was lost in unpleasant reflection; and Ferdinand, burning with a generous indignation against the licentious seducer who had brought shame and desolation to these abodes of innocence and peace, sat revolving in his mind various projects for still rescuing the unfortunate and deluded fugitive; perhaps not a little invigorated in these benevolent thoughts by the promised happiness of receiving Adonia's thanks, and conveying pleasure to *her* heart.

The

The Marchioness found them in the midst of these reveries; and was soon made acquainted with the cause of their visible dejection by their unpolished hostess; who related the story of Annette's misconduct, and Anselm's death, with the same stern aspect, and the same unqualified words, which she had employed before. The Marchioness joined in her indignation against the unfortunate girl; and, admiring her *Spartan virtue*, which disdained lamentation, she kindly inquired whether it would be in her power to serve her before her departure from Languedoc. The woman then told her the conditions on which they held their little farm; and that, unless their case was properly represented to their landlord, they must inevitably be turned out of it, at the expiration of a few months, to make way for a richer tenant, to whom it had been promised on the event of old Anselm's death.

The

The Marchioness was fortunately acquainted with the gentleman to whom the woman told her it belonged, and readily promised to intercede for them. "But in case of the worst," added she, "we must endeavour to raise you a little stock of your own amongst us, that, *should* you be turned out, you may be enabled to set yourselves up comfortably elsewhere. Allow me to begin by subscribing twelve Louis-d'ors towards it." "And I," said Ferdinand, "though almost a child of bounty myself, will venture to add twelve more." The young ladies drew their purses; and the good woman was presented with forty Louis-d'ors, a sum greater than she had ever possessed before at one time.—She received it with cheerful thankfulness, and immediately called in her husband and two brothers to join in her acknowledgements. They entered, followed by their families, who were all alike sharers in this unexpected good fortune. Joy, surprise, and gratitude, threw

them at the feet of their benefactors, and a momentary air of renovated happiness expanded itself on every countenance; but still there was a dejection imprinted on their hearts, which refused to yield to gladness long. Several of the women presently melted into tears; and the men looked mournfully at the two fair cousins, whose youth and beauty reminded them of *their* fair blighted flower, so cruelly torn away from them! "Think no more of the past!" said the Marchioness kindly. "Your good old father is now happy; and Annette would not have been lost to you, had she merited your regret. It is now in your own power to regain the cheerfulness and contentment which have recently been disturbed; and you will find the task by no means a difficult one, if you do not wilfully reject it by yielding to fruitless and unmeaning lamentation." "We are not ungrateful, madame," said one of the men; "but we have lost a good and respectable father; and we have

have seen the best and the loveliest girl in all the province made the sacrifice to a villain's arts! There was not her like amongst us all! The stranger who passed by wondered at her beauty, and blessed her; and the little children did that for Annette's least word which they would have refused to all our chiding. The girl was so sweet and gentle, there was not one of us but would have wrought on our knees to serve her!" "Yes!" exclaimed a fine-looking young man, who had hitherto hung back in silent dejection, "I would have gone to death to serve her, though she looked down upon me! and I will travel to the farthest end of the world but she shall be revenged! It was good of you, ladies, to give these poor people your money. May heaven bless you for it! If all the rich were like you, we should not now have these misfortunes to lament.—But will money purchase back Annette? Ah! money will not purchase back happiness, when it is once gone! The rich think

think they can cancel misfortune by giving us their purses!" exclaimed he wildly, and with increasing vehemence. "They first trample upon us, and they then hold out money to us to heal the indignity!—poor vile compensation for injured honor and insulted feelings! But they forget that we have feelings like themselves: they know nothing of the honor of untitled honesty. A poor man, with no hereditary dignities to support, has nothing to do with honor, they think. Marchioness! a good name is better than a fine title; and the villain who has blasted Annette's shall not live to say that a peasant has no right to assert his honor!"—And with these words he rushed out of the cottage, as if unable to bear the acuteness of the recollections which he had called up; leaving the Marchioness penetrated with admiration of his native sense and independent spirit, and with a warm compassion for his unfeigned sorrow.

The

The villagers now dispersed, blessing and thanking their benefactors; but it was more the thankfulness of principle than of gladness; for they bore in their bosoms feelings which the elation of unexpected good fortune could not at once triumph over. Through the Marchioness's interest they were permitted to remain in the place of their nativity, and the money she had given them proved a fund of accumulating affluence: but a long time elapsed before old Anselm's death was forgotten, or Annette became unlamented. "They had not her like amongst them all!" and the pipe and tabor lay by untouched.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Like birds, whose beauties languish, half conceal'd,
Till, mounted in the air, their glossy plumes
Expanding shine with azure, green, and gold,
How blessings brighten as they take their flight!

YOUNG.

ON the following morning the Marchioness and her young party prepared to leave Montpelier. Just as they were about to depart, they were surprised by the entrance of the young man who had sworn vengeance against Annette's seducer. He had heard that they were going to Paris, where

where he vainly hoped he might find his lost love; and, being out of employment, he came to entreat that the Marchioness would admit him as one of her suite. "I want no hire, madame," said he: "I will serve you to the best of my abilities; but, having never been a lackey before, I am sensible that my services will at first be but awkward. I only entreat to be received into your service without fee or reward." The Marchioness, however, declined complying with his wishes; saying, that she had already a greater number of servants than she needed; though, in reality, her only objection arose from her fear of displeasing the Marquis, by taking into her service one who confessed himself unqualified for it, and who besides had so recently evinced a boldness and manliness of spirit which were but ill-calculated to recommend him to the good graces of a despotic aristocrat. But St. Loudon, observing his disappointment, and being much pleased with his ap-

pearance,

pearance, asked whether he would like to have him for a master, and ride one of his horses back to Paris? which, as he intended to travel in the carriage with the ladies, he had no employment for. The young man joyfully accepted his benevolent offer; and St. Loudon committed him to the care and tutelage of his valet, who was going to bespeak fresh horses and accommodations for them at —, where they meant to dine. "And now tell me your name?"—said Ferdinand. "Hubert St. Croix, sir, at your service!" "Well, Hubert," said Ferdinand, giving him money, "mount your horse, and let me see that you are properly equipped by the time the carriage arrives at ——." But, alas! poor Hubert, with all his strength and agility of form, was but an unskilful horseman!—The party had not proceeded above three leagues from Montpelier, when they overtook Hubert struggling with his horse; which, enraged by his inexpert resistance of its proud speed,

was

was plunging and rearing with the most furious velocity; while he, not without much difficulty, maintained his seat, every moment threatening to prove fatal to him. Ferdinand immediately requested leave to stop the carriage, and, in spite of the remonstrances of his fellow-travellers, flew to his assistance; for poor Hubert was alone, the other servant having left him to execute his master's orders when he found that there was little chance of his being able to keep up with him; and Ferdinand knew that no one was so well acquainted with the temper of the horse as himself. He now seized the bridle, and endeavoured to sooth the horse while Hubert dismounted; but the irritated animal no sooner found himself eased from his burden, than with a violent plunge he broke away, and Ferdinand received a stroke on his side, which leveled him with the ground. He was lifted into the carriage totally insensible! and the agitated Adonia, no

longer

longer alive to any other feelings than those of terror and concern, was the first to receive him in her arms, hanging over his death-shaded countenance with looks of anguish and despair which no painting could do justice to.

A long and gloomy interval of suspense ensued, before his pale cheeks exhibited the slightest change of hue. At length he opened his eyes feebly, and made an effort to raise himself; but how were all their fears augmented, when they saw him in a moment covered with blood, which upon this movement issued in torrents from his mouth and nose! "He has broken a blood vessel!" exclaimed the Marchioness, in a tone of extreme agitation. These were sounds which entered Adonia's soul: she grew faint and sick; but, still eager to assist the beloved sufferer, she disregarded her own feelings, and continued to support him in her arms, wiping away the blood as it fell upon his

neck

neck and hands. Not a house was in sight; not a person appeared who could afford them any aid. They were wholly unprovided with medicine of any kind, and knew not how to proceed. A servant was instantly dispatched to the nearest village, with orders to bring them the first medical man who could be found; and they waited his return in still and silent agony; fearful that the slightest movement or emotion would accelerate the fate which they had too much cause to dread. Soon, however, the violence of the bleeding abated, and Ferdinand began to revive to recollection. He looked heavily around, found himself supported by Adonia, and saw her eyes, which she did not attempt to withdraw, bent anxiously upon his. "Not a word!" said the Marchioness eagerly: "you must not even *think*!" Ferdinand feebly smiled upon Adonia with a look of the purest gratitude and love, and again closed his

eyes,

eyes, as if he could have wished to resign existence in no happier situation!

Some hours elapsed before the servant returned with a surgeon, who found his patient so much better, that he permitted him to go on; though the utmost caution in travelling was necessary, to prevent a renewal of the bleeding. They proceeded slowly towards ——, Ferdinand still supported by Adonia; who, unchecked by any feelings of false delicacy, and imagining that no one else could be so attentive as herself to break every uneasy movement of the carriage, would not hear of his changing his position, but continued to watch over him with the most unremitting solicitude. As soon as they arrived at ——, he was carefully lifted from the carriage, and conveyed to bed; where the surgeon gave him a composing draught; and, desiring that he should be kept perfectly undisturbed for some hours, left him to repose. The

draught soon operating upon his exhausted senses, he sunk into a profound sleep, and about six o'clock in the evening awoke much refreshed. On the following morning he was able to leave his chamber; but he still felt a severe pain in his side; and the doctor, not thinking him sufficiently strong to hazard any unnecessary exertion, advised his remaining at —— at least another day. In consequence of this advice, the Marchioness sent forward a messenger to Paris, to inform their mutual friends of the accident which detained them; at the same time endeavouring to soften their alarm, by assuring them of his convalescence.

Poor Hubert, who had been the unlucky cause of their misfortune, still remained quite inconsolable. No assurance could persuade him that his master was likely to recover, while he saw him still pale and languid; and with the bitterest remorse he reproached himself as the author

thor of the disaster which (as he apprehended) would bring so much goodness to an untimely grave. He neither eat nor slept: his whole mind was incessantly occupied by his amiable master, who was rendered inexpressibly dear to him by the sufferings which he thought *he* had brought upon him, still more than by the benevolence which had induced him to receive him into his service; and he testified, by a thousand little acts of fidelity and attachment, the warm and generous sentiments of which his heart was composed. Often he exclaimed in the fervor of his enthusiasm, "Ah! if he should but recover, I will never leave him more! I will give up the pursuit of Annette! I will abandon every other tie, that I may prove my gratitude and love to him, by living for him alone, whose life was risked for mine!" At night he would steal to his chamber, and stretch himself on the floor by his bedside, that he might watch by him while he slept, and be

be ready on the slightest movement to attend his commands; and, if sleep overpowered him there, he would start up in the midst of some frightful dream, which always pictured his master struggling in the agonies of death, and severely chide himself for his imaginary neglect.

They were detained at —— four days; for Ferdinand's recovery did not follow the prediction of his doctor, and he still continued to have feverish and unpleasant symptoms, with a violent pain in his side: but, anxious to release his fellow-travellers from their uncomfortable residence at a place where the accommodations were of the poorest kind, and keenly regretting the anxiety and uneasiness which his confinement occasioned them, he now insisted on proceeding with an air of cheerfulness and decision which overpowered all their efforts to oppose him; and they once more set out. They did not reach Paris, however, till after a

tedious and painful journey of near ten days: and they were scarcely settled in the Hôtel d'Estreaux, when Ferdinand, prepared by the ferment of his spirits and the disordered state of his blood to receive the contagion which circulated around him on every side, was seized with an epidemic fever that prevailed in the neighbourhood, and was declared to be in the most imminent danger. The instant he was made acquainted with the nature of his disorder, he entreated that they would remove him to some other place; but this the physicians objected to as highly dangerous and improper in the stage of the malady which he had already reached; and the Marchioness positively forbidding his disobedience of the least of their directions, he was, though unwillingly, obliged to rest contented with her assurances that none of the family should be permitted to approach his chamber while any danger of infection remained. Adonia and her cousin were sent to Admiral

Tracey's hôtel, and the two brothers of the former received orders to remain at the *Ecole Militaire*, where they had been placed for some time, until they should receive farther instructions from their friends. After a severe struggle, youth and a strong constitution triumphing over Ferdinand's distemper, he was pronounced out of all danger, and permitted to leave his room. But what were his anguish and self-accusation, when he found that his amiable, his exalted, friend, the Marchioness, unable, from her benevolent anxiety for him to submit herself to the rules which she had prescribed to the rest of her family, had exposed herself to infection by visiting his chamber during his insensibility, and was now confined to her own with all the most malignant symptoms of the disorder which he had surmounted! Affliction now, indeed, wore its sablest hue. The haughty, the proud-spirited, Marchioness,—who refused to accommodate herself to the submissive manners of a court, yet placed

a value

a value on her own distinctions, whence she was scorned by the proud and feared by the insignificant,—the firm mind which never melted into needless sympathy, though ever ready to assist and relieve,—the woman who disdained the weaknesses of her sex, yet never turned away from the meanest office of humanity,—was now watched over with the most trembling affection by a train of domestics, every one of whom would gladly have taken her disorder upon himself to save her,—was the object of anxious solicitude to every one who knew her; and of the most heart-rending distress, which ever pierced the bosoms of love and veneration, to all the members of her domestic circle; who, regardless of danger to themselves, made daily inquiries at her chamber-door in person. No arguments, no entreaties, could wean Adonia from a constant attendence at her bedside. But the fever was hostile no farther! Its ravages stopped with her, and she was its destined victim! Though Ferdinand was sensible

that his remaining longer in Paris could afford no relief to his suffering friends, and might prove materially injurious to his own business, he could not think of beginning his journey until he had witnessed the event of her disorder; and the whole party destined for England waited the dreaded crisis with feelings of interest and anxiety which superseded every other concern, and were a just tribute to the superior virtues of her who excited them. Alas! the crisis arrived: there was no hope! She recovered from a long period of insensibility only to be conscious of approaching death. She saw every one around her dissolved in tears, and pale with watching and anxiety; and her heart exulted in their love, while she chid their lamentations. Every moment there were messengers arriving to inquire for her,—from the court, from the city, from every place where she had walked about,—the proud phœnix of the multitude, who had loved while they feared her, and felt the

effect of her superiority, while they refused to own its ascendency! "They are going to lose their haughty tyrant," said she, smiling, "and now they wish to retain the chains which galled them so cruelly!" At this moment a billet was given her from the Duchess de C. intreating to be admitted to see her. This lady had long been the Marchioness's most avowed enemy, though she secretly respected her virtues, and admired her independence. She had been offended by her lofty treatment in some little court-fracas, in which she had opposed her; and, enraged by the continuance of her unyielding deportment, she had at length blazed forth as her decided rival and opponent. Though sensible that in the affair alluded to, the Marchioness had been guided by a principle of justice, and was supported in her proud resistance by the consciousness of the rectitude of her original motive, she now entreated her pardon in the most earnest and pathetic terms; and conjured her to

allow her an opportunity of personally acknowledging her injustice. "If there were no fear of communicating my disorder to her," said the Marchioness, "I would willingly and joyfully admit her; but I cannot consent to expose an enemy to danger merely to gratify her in a romantic caprice, though I can forgive *my friends* their negligence of themselves. Those who have known me always may be believed to bewail me; but those, who only do me justice when they can no longer withhold it, need not be humoured in a distress merely fanciful and momentary." She then desired to be supported in bed, and dictated the following reply, while St. Loudon wrote for her what Adonia was unable to do: "I have always endeavoured to act as I thought best, without consulting the wayward humours of others, or the modes of acting prescribed by the world; and I die with a firm conviction that I never have essentially or wilfully injured any one! I

am

am pleased to find that you do me justice in regard the foolish affair which I had forgotten till you recalled it to me; but I do not thank you for *being convinced*: that is your own gain! I sincerely thank you, however, for the kindness which you express for me; but cannot think of admitting you to the chamber of infection, merely to gratify a momentary and unavailing glow of tenderness. Could it be of any real service to you, I would willingly grant your request, even at a greater risk. My reason acknowledges your many good qualities, and I could fold you with delight to the heart you have so long estranged yourself from; but I have always avoided any useless ebullitions of sensibility; and the least danger attending your coming hither would be to awaken feelings which are neither of ornament nor utility both in yourself and me. I wish to die as I have lived,—steady in what I think justice, and unyielding in what appears to me,

 futile

futile or superfluous." "And canst thou really die?" said Ferdinand, laying down his pen, and regarding her with a smile of painful enthusiasm, while his eyes filled with tears: "Thou art not surely mortal!" She grasped his hand; and a few moments afterward her whole countenance became distorted by agony. "Ah! yes, my friends! I feel all the pangs of mortality upon me, though my spirit shrinks not!" and the first tears she had perhaps ever shed for herself were extorted by the anguish of expiring nature.—She had no longer strength to wipe them away, though she strove to smile through them; and, as she laid her head back on the pillow, she feebly uttered, "Do not think I feel much pain:—it will soon be over!"

The Marquis, who stood gazing on the bed with despair imprinted on his countenance, now rushed towards her, and clasped her in his arms.—"Do not, do

do not leave me, Antonia! I will not be parted from you! I will not survive you!" She gently pushed him away, and laying her pale cold hand on his cheek,—"*I* do not tremble," said she; "and yet I am going to leave all my friends! *You* will only lose your Antonia, and have many more to live for!" "Oh! no, no, Antonia!—Thou art my all!" he wildly uttered.

The chamber was crowded with weeping friends, and the whole house filled with the lamentations of the poor, who owned her for their benefactress,—the rich, who revered her virtues,—and the proud, who acknowledged her superiority. After a short slumber, which was the prelude of death, she again raised herself; and, looking round upon the desolate group, she saw and felt how much she was beloved by them; and heard from every quarter the whispers of anxiety and alarm. "My beloved friends," said she, "this is grateful

ful to my heart! but my reason despises such useless lamentation. You are sensible that the affection which you bear me was never purchased on my part by the display of feelings like these!—No!" said she, with an air of inexpressible majesty. "To engage affection needs not the outward blandishments of tenderness! To merit esteem needs not those false refinements of feeling which weaken the powers of acting, while they seem to adorn the act! Adonia, Johanna, my dear children! I have lived a stranger to these fine sensibilities, and yet you see I die respected and beloved. Treasure up the lesson I leave with you:—it is the lesson of self-conviction; for I was once young, timid, and susceptible, like you. Respect the prejudices of the world when they have virtue for their object, but do not adopt them when reason points out a nobler guide! We may make ourselves respected without even *appearing* to concede to the false notions of others, and

it is folly to wear chains which do not bind us! You see the being who was feared for her pride, and wondered at for her singularity, has more tears shed for her death than would embalm a thousand of those women who suffer their benevolence to be absorbed by sensibility, and timidly submit their own peculiar powers to be restricted by the general ceremonial of the world! Ah! it is honorable to die thus!"

With a beautiful smile she here ceased; life fluttered for a moment on her lips:—she would have added more, but the current was stopped—for ever!

CHAP. XXXIII.

Who, who, would live, my Narva, just to breathe
This idle air, and indolently run,
From day to day, the still-revolving round
Of life's mean offices and sickly joys,—
But in the service of mankind to be
A guardian-god below?

THOMSON.

THE Marquis's grief was wild and turbulent; but its first tumults were soon exhausted by their own violence; and his mind sunk into a gloomy calm, disdainful of consolation, and from which he at length took refuge in the cabal of political faction: but who could supply to

Adonia

Adonia the friend, the monitor, she had lost? Who was now to be the guide of her youth, and the protector of her virtues? Her grief, though calm and unobtrusive, was rooted in the heart; and every hour produced some distressful circumstance to remind her of the greatness of her loss, and make her tremble for the future; for the Marquis, no longer preserving even the shew of affection towards her, treated her with a supercilious haughtiness and distance that perpetually insulted her orphan-state, and sharpened the arrows of affliction by contumely. She was, however, greatly above want; for her kind benefactress had bequeathed to her, besides all the jewels she could call her own, a legacy of four thousand crowns, which the Marquis had instantly ordered to be paid in the first emotions occasioned by reading the Marchioness's will, who had herself put it into his hands some hours before her death. This, added to her aunt Fitzwilliam's legacy,

secured

secured to Adonia a genteel income, on which she might live in sufficient affluence, without laying claim to that protection which the Marquis did not encourage her to hope from him.

But, as it had been the Marchioness's particular desire that she should continue to live at the Hôtel d'Estreaux, on this account, as well as for the sake of her brothers, (who had no other guardian to fly to, no dependence but on his interest,) Adonia determined that she would not wilfully withdraw herself from his protection, as long as she could remain without entirely yielding that independence which he always seemed to consider as an usurped right. She, therefore, delayed complying with Johanna's solicitation, that she would fix her abode with her in England, until she should have paid every reasonable deference to the wishes of her departed friend. St. Loudon had not yet left Paris.—He saw Adonia drooping and

and unhappy: he feared from the air and manner of every thing around her, that she was not now the cherished child of parental affection; and he entreated her to confide to him the subject of her uneasiness. She told him all; and owned that it was rather on her brothers' account, than from any remaining claim she felt towards adhering to the Marchioness's request, that she submitted to her present humiliating station in the house of a man whose conduct so entirely frustrated the motives of that request.—But all St. Loudon's arguments, to persuade her to put an end to her abode there, produced no other effect on her determination than a promise that, if she was compelled to quit it, she would undoubtedly fix her residence in England; either with Johanna, or under the auspices of Admiral Tracey. In one of these hours of confidential communication, Ferdinand, who only lingered in Paris in the hope of collecting arguments to justify.

justify what the fervency of his passion now rendered more important from the unpleasant circumstances to which he saw her exposed, at length ventured to disclose his heart to her; and solicited the promise of her hand, in the event of his present prospects proving successful.—She heard him with undisguised pleasure; and frankly avowed that he had long possessed her warmest esteem, her preference. "But, my friend," said she, "I will enter into no engagement that may hereafter prove injurious to you. You are going among new friends,—relations who may form other views for you, and who have a right, if they do justice to you, to expect your deference to their wishes in return, in an affair of such moment as an alliance for life. Your grandfather knows nothing of me.—A stranger and a foreigner, can I expect that he will view me with your partiality? Besides, you know, I am *your cousin*, a solitary branch of that part of his family whose memory

memory is most obnoxious to Lord Wallingford; and it would be highly impolitic in you to bespeak his favor for a proscribed daughter, until you are yourself sure of not being treated as a proscribed son!"—"No, Adonia! if he saw *you*, my claims would be doubly powerful! You would be my best advocate, my irresistible pleader!"—"Well, if my eloquence is so powerful, suffer it to persuade *you!* We have no right to obey only the impulses of our own wishes. If we have parents, we must submit to their decisions; and, depend upon it, I will not be accessary to *your* rebellion, whatever flatteries you may employ."—"Say, then, that you will be mine, if no obstacle arises from my grandfather? But it is weak, it is absurd, to admit any obstacle from him! He can have no right to my obedience, who forfeited his claims on my father by perfidy and unkindness. If my hopes of you are to rest on his decision, I may tear them from my heart

at once! for I can expect no kindness, no justice, from a hoary-headed traitor!"—"Then rather renounce them at once!" replied Adonia, with an air of dignified reproof, "than suffer them to gain the ascendency over reason and duty. St. Loudon, we are both but young.—This is perhaps the first attachment of the heart we have either of us formed, and we imagine that it can be the only one: but, were we to part with the certainty of never meeting again, the necessity of exertion would soon rouze us to combat the disappointment; and a very few years would probably, under such circumstances, see us happy in new engagements, and as capable of fulfilling the business of life, as if our first plans of happiness or utility had never been interrupted.—It is by keeping alive a train of doubtful expectations, whose issue we cannot command, that we embitter disappointments and frustrate consolation. Repress these deceitful flatterers: yield to no condi-

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tional agreement, that promises hope where there is only uncertainty, and the mind will retain its proper equanimity during the interval of suspence. Be prepared also to meet success or disappointment with equal dignity!" "Cold, yet affecting, reasoner!" exclaimed St. Loudon; "and do you think that I can cease to wish, to hope, to think of you incessantly, while memory is inscribed with the enchanting assurance you have lately given me of your regard? Can I possess the heart of Adonia de Rosier, and cease for a moment to ruminate on the blessing? Think not, however, that selfish inducements alone urge me to make that entreaty which my adverse circumstances have so long silenced. I once thought no motives could have tempted me to disclose the wishes corroding my bosom, till I could offer you with my heart a fortune worthy of your acceptance, and a rank in society equal to your birth. But I see you now, Adonia, left on the pro-

tection of a man who is not disposed to cherish you as he ought, and subjected to all the dangers to which a young and lovely female is liable, who has no natural guardian to protect her; exposed, perhaps, to improper addresses,—to the licentious wishes of titled libertines!—De l'Avignon is the Marquis's *friend!* Adonia, you are not safe to breathe the same atmosphere with that worst of villains! Promise that you will be mine, and you invest me with a right,—a dear, a sacred, right,—to defend you from injury; to avenge the least look that threatens you with insult; and to fly to the farthest corner of the earth, to claim you as my own!" "I want no such feats of knight-errantry, St. Loudon," said she, putting on an air of gaiety that was far from her heart. "De l'Avignon and I are, I hope, in no danger of breathing the atmosphere of the Chatelet together; and I should not like to have such a sanguinary-minded husband as a champion,

champion, who would think proper to put every man to death, who might chance to look at me without due ceremony!—But a thought has just occurred to me: there *is* an alternative, St. Loudon!"—She hesitated,—she blushed deeply.—"Why should I blush to acknowledge, that, to be united to you beyond the power of fortune to separate us, presents to me an inducement strong enough to supersede the forms prescribed to my sex; without, it seems to me, injuring any law of real delicacy. My fortune is sufficient for us both.—If you can be content with competence and Adonia, she is yours!—without exposing you to the issue of a doubtful trial, which, if it may extend your means of being useful in society, may also return you to your present state, when Adonia may perhaps have no longer either herself or her fortune to bestow upon you!—You hesitate,—you blush. Do you blush because you think me selfish enough to sacrifice

your prospects to my own wishes?—to my own fears of losing you? No, St. Loudon! Banish the unworthy suspicion! I am a woman, but not therefore a coward. I dread no insult; I fear no injury. I think I could relinquish even you, and live to act my part in society with firmness: but it seems to me that we may both be as happy, as useful, with our little property, as the bounded wishes of reason can desire. If we employ our means to the best advantage, we cannot reproach ourselves for having abandoned a doubtful prospect, to avail ourselves of a certain good; for the difference between the power that affluence would give, and that of simple competence, is with us balanced by the uncertainty of the one and the possession of the other. The superfluities of luxury we would surely neither of us desire to indulge in; and what is rank but a gaudy ornament, that possesses no real value, and that can gain us no additional esteem? But, if it is necessary

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cessary to sooth ourselves with a distinction, the importance of which is decided by opinion, is it not enough that I know you to be the son of Lord Stavordale, and that I am, in your eyes, the daughter of De Bellefonde?"

The rapidity and energy with which she spoke had prevented St. Loudon from interrupting her. He gazed on her with wonder, with reverence, and delight.—Scarcely could he resist the alluring prospect that she held out to him; but his spirit was too aspiring, too independent, to yield to it. He could not submit to be outdone in generosity even by Adonia; he could not brook the idea of sharing a scanty subsistence with *her*, whose virtues would give lustre to the highest rank and affluence; and with the deepest gratitude, with the most fervent acknowledgements, he combated all her arguments to this flattering compromise, and entreated her to urge it no longer. "But, Adonia,"

Adonia," said he, after a pause, "if you could make this sacrifice for me; if you can be contented to relinquish your claims to the splendor of rank and the luxuries of affluence, to take to your heart the indigent and friendless St. Loudon; surely there exists no reason for your forbidding me to pursue those prospects as your husband, which you say might prove incompatible with our union when a parent is invested with a right to oppose it? I cannot be responsible to Lord Wallingford for any act previous to his acknowledging me his son. His pride cannot be offended by an alliance with rank like yours; and, if he is capable of those feelings of natural affection from which alone I can hope to establish my hereditary rights, he could not behold you without proudly taking you to his heart! And yet—whither do my importunate wishes lead me? That dreadful narrative of my father's sufferings, what kindness does it teach me to expect? what

what justice, that is not extorted by the hand of law? And could I expose you to the possibility of being rejected by an unfeeling yet privileged tyrant, by whom you ought to be received with pride and exultation?—No, Adonia! For your sake I will brave his indignities alone; but I could not, durst not, think of subjecting *you* to contumely; and never, never, can I accept your hand, to wed you to poverty and obscurity; to receive from you the subsistence which I ought to give!"

"Ah! proud, mistaken, St. Loudon!" replied she, "are you the slave of prejudice? But go! I have no more to urge. Pursue your notions of justice, and I will adhere to mine; though perhaps this difference of sentiment may separate us for ever!"—But will you leave me no hope, Adonia? No fond assurance of one day calling you mine? Will you not promise that if Lord Wallingford consents to our union, you will permit me to claim your hand?" "I will bind myself by no

promise that depends on future contingencies, St. Loudon," replied Adonia, with an assumed composure, which ill-concealed the struggles of her heart. "I have told you that you are very dear to me; surely you must put little faith in my stability, if you fear any opposition to our future union, which *I* can reasonably prevent! Could your proud spirit have deigned to yield to the alternative I offered you, my hand should have been yours.—But why fetter our hearts with the idea of engagements which reason and duty may hereafter oppose? When you are Lord Wallingford's heir, you may see objects in a different light which now appear desirable and right; and, when I see you invested with titles, and received into a high-born family, whose pride may be offensive to me, and whose prejudices may counteract my favorite views, I cannot but desire the liberty of at least weighing these circumstances before I submit to them."

Adonia

Adonia then rose hastily, and would have left him: but St. Loudon gently detained her, to entreat that she would at least permit him to write to her, and afford him the consolation of sometimes hearing of her welfare from herself.—With some hesitation she at length yielded to this request; and on the following day he left Paris, accompanied by his uncle, Mr. Stanhope; Admiral Tracey, and the two young ladies.

Desolate and forlorn, Adonia felt their departure as the deprivation of her only remaining friends; and her recent misfortune in the loss of her benefactress was renewed in all its darkest colours, when she had no longer the voice of sympathy to sooth, or of friendship to console, her. Her first friend, Miss Belmour, had been recalled to England some months before by the death of her mother; and Adonia now recollected with surprize, that she had neither heard from nor seen her

 favorite

favorite Mademoiselle d'Argneau since her return to Paris, a circumstance which the scenes of domestic distress she had been involved in had hitherto prevented her from remarking. In order to divert her mind from its mournful contemplations, by inquiring after her former acquaintances, as well as to pay a proper tribute of attention to her worthy old governess, she tied on her hat, and took a walk to Madame Brumelle's new habitation, a neat small house at the end of a park adjoining to the Hôtel d'Estreaux, which the Marchioness had put her into on their going to Montpelier.

Adonia, as usual, found her old friend seated at work with her spectacles on, and her green apron spread upon her lap; and likewise soon perceived that she had lost nothing of her disposition for satire since they parted; though their first meeting, which forcibly recalled the friend

friend they had both lost, was solemn and affecting. To her inquiries after Mademoiselle d'Argneau, Madame Brumelle was slow of replying; but at length, with keen acrimony and invective, she fully accounted for her neglect of Adonia, by informing her, that this giddy young woman had completed the measure of her follies some weeks before, by eloping with a young Swiss officer whom nobody knew, and was gone nobody knew whither; that all her friends were in the utmost wrath against her; and that her father, far from endeavouring to pursue or reclaim her, had forbidden her name to be mentioned in the house she had dishonored, swearing never to receive her more! She described the lover as a profligate and a beggar; but declared that she had expected nothing better than what had happened from the first moment she saw them together. "For, would you believe it!" said she, "they honored *me* with a visit, not many days before their

 departure.

departure. Mademoiselle d'Argneau came, she said, to inquire when I had heard from you? and whether there was any prospect of your returning soon? I suppose she wanted to shew you how well she was *paired*; and truly I never saw a couple more alike. His face was as fair and plausible as her own; he bowed when she curtsied; he shewed his white teeth when she laughed to shew hers; and they played shuttlecock with one another, making fine speeches that were as hollow as the battledores that bandied it, till my ears were quite stunned, and my eyes wearied with looking at them.—Ah! Mademoiselle Adonia! such a fly-headed friend as that was no fit companion for you; and I own I am not sorry she has taken herself out of your reach; though, God knows, I wish no harm may befall her! for, after all, poor mismanaged thing, it was no fruit of her watering. She was made a fool of before she had got her senses.—Young girls should be locked up, or

or kept in the nursery, till they are fit to see the world; and not turned out of their leading strings before they have learned how to walk." Adonia listened to this relation with a grief and surprise which precluded all power of speech. Though her improved judgement had for some time shewn her Mademoiselle d'Argneau's levity and coquetry in their true colours, she still retained a warm affection for her, founded on the supposed goodness of her heart, a grateful remembrance of the kindness and vivacity which had exhilarated her hours of gaiety, and the friendly solicitude that had soothed her bed of sickness; nor could she contemplate the disgrace of this beautiful, this worshipped, idol without the keenest anguish.

Adonia returned home with a new shock to her feelings, a new arrow rankling in her bosom; and she spent several days in her own apartment, abandoned to melancholy

lancholy reflection, without even being inquired after by the Marquis, or seeing her brothers, the idea of whom was her only remaining solace in France. They were still at the *Ecole Militaire*, a few leagues from Paris; and, as the Marquis made no offer of bringing them to see her, fearful of offending him, she contented herself for the present with writing to them, and receiving their innocent and affectionate replies, over which she shed many tears of soothing tenderness. She was at length awakened from her solitary reveries by letters from England, which afforded her the most delightful consolation, by reminding her that she had still some cherished friends, fondly and anxiously interested in her welfare. They were from Ferdinand and Johanna; the former said little besides a repetition of those expressions of gratitude and love which every reader has perhaps given or received after a *dénouement* like Ferdinand's and Adonia's, and an earnest

entreaty

entreaty that she would relieve his anxiety for her health and happiness by an early reply. He had yet seen none of his relations, nor been able to learn in what part of the kingdom the Earl of Wallingford was at present to be found; he was, however, informed that he was still alive; and Ferdinand wrote in a strain of animation which seemed to be prompted by hope, and which awakened a corresponding gaiety in Adonia's mind. Johanna's letter contained more information, and a new subject of distress to Adonia. After giving her the particulars of their journey to Havre, which had been rapid and agreeable, she continued thus:—

"We got on board of Admiral Herbert's yacht, which had been waiting for us several days at Havre, and with favoring gales, a smiling sky, and all the paraphernalia of a *bon voyage*, we set sail for the Isle of Wight.—But I ought first to have told you that we parted with

Mr.

Mr. Stanhope and *your* Ferdinand, (for yours he must be!) at Havre. They bade us adieu with all suitable heaviness of heart, no doubt; and we in return paid them the parting regret that was due to your friend and your *caro sposo in futuro.* Ah, Adonia! I am assuming a gaiety that is not really in me. About six o'clock in the evening, we were overtaken by a storm, which drove us up the Channel along the coast of Sussex; and, nearly opposite Beachy-head, we ran foul of a small vessel that was attempting to cross from thence to Abbeville. The shock almost reduced her to a wreck, though *we* received little injury; and Admiral Herbert immediately sent out his boats to take up the affrighted crew.—With difficulty, with danger, not to be described, this was at length effected; and they were all safely lodged with us. There were two passengers on board, a gentleman and his servant, by whom the vessel had been hired. The former, a thin emaciated

ciated figure, was taken up in a state of total insensibility, and carried down to the cabin, where he was stretched upon a sofa; and we all crowded round him, to use our endeavours for his recovery. It was almost night, and the storm contributed to darken the sky, so that none of us could distinguish the stranger's features.—Without any lights on board, (being wholly unprepared for this unpleasant detention,) I think nothing could exceed the gloomy horror of the scene in which Fanny and I were left with these two strangers; while Admiral Herbert and the rest of the men returned upon deck to attend to the vessel. It was long before we were relieved from our sad suspence. The wind and rain howled with dismal sobs; and we seemed, in this dark cabin, hanging over an expiring stranger, to be shut up in a mansion of death! We sprinkled his face with water; we rubbed his hands and temples; we bedewed him with our tears, which flowed incessantly from

from pity and terror: but still he revived not; and we only knew by his heavy interrupted breathing that he was not dead!—At length the storm somewhat abated, and we were informed that we had been carried past our port, and had now changed our tack to regain the Isle of Wight.—Admiral Herbert, who brought us this joyful news, insisted that Fanny and I should repose ourselves quietly in bed; but he could not persuade us to leave the stranger while any thing could be done for him. Towards midnight for the first time we heard him speak. Think, Adonia, how I started at the well-known voice!—It was poor Lord Arunville's! I could hardly refrain from embracing him; and I *did* kiss his hand with transport to find that he was alive. But, alas! his hand was cold and tremulous; and day dawned upon us before he knew us, or was sensible to our concern.

"We reached Fort-Mervan about six o'clock in the morning; and Lord Arunville was put immediately to bed, and every office of kindness and hospitality has been administered that could contribute to his recovery.—But indeed, Adonia, I do not believe he will ever recover! for the malady is in his heart, and his constitution is quite undermined.—The doctors apprehend a consumption, and think the sea-air will be useful to him; so he has consented to remain here a week or two, and has appointed me to be his nurse; for I have promised Fanny that I will stay with her till winter, if my guardians do not object to it.—And now, Adonia, I must tell you what relates more particularly to yourself; though I know there is nothing to hope for poor Lord Arunville. Yesterday he left his chamber, and asked me to indulge him with half an hour's conversation alone. I went with him to Fanny's dressing-room; and, when we were seated, he began by telling

telling me of Mademoiselle d'Argneau's elopement, (which I suppose you are fully acquainted with,) and that he was now free; for that a conduct like hers canceled every engagement on his part.—It wrung my heart to observe how his face glowed with pleasure as he said "I am now free!" but I could not interrupt him; and in that fine animated language which you know he possesses at command, he painted the ardor of his attachment to you,—a passion which had preyed upon his health and blasted his happiness;—described the transport he experienced in the prospect that was now opened to him, when he could solicit your hand without infringing the laws of honor; and informed me, that, at the time when his voyage was impeded by the disaster I have recounted, he was hastening to you, to lay before you the subject of his hopes and his wishes.——I was silent.—My sighs, my varying countenance, prepared him for some painful disclosure,

and

and he entreated me to tell him why I met his delighted communications with such cold reserve? "I was once led to flatter myself," said he, "that Adonia regarded me with partiality.—This enchanting idea fancy has perhaps sketched out beyond its real limits, since the hour when I was permitted to cherish the wishes of my heart without self-reproach.—But, O Miss Fitzwilliam! if you know that I have deceived myself,—if you know any dreadful barrier between me and happiness,—hasten to free me from suspense! dash the cup of hope from my lips, ere it turn to poison!" With as much firmness as I could assume, in as softening language as I could select, I told him, (though unauthorised to disclose the secret,) that your heart was indeed engaged to another.—I thought it barbarity to leave him in error, and knew you would not reproach me for an act of justice. O

Adonia!

Adonia! what a look of anguish he gave me! Pale, vacant, speechless, he seemed for some minutes wholly unconscious of existence!—At length he rouzed himself from this shocking torpor, and said, "If it be so, I must submit; but I can receive the dreadful fiat from no one but herself! I will write to her; I will entreat her to be candid, but to sooth me with her pity; and, if she repeats to me that I have nothing to hope, I shall at least find some consolation in tracing the dear words formed by her hand: I will preserve her letter until death, as a talisman to defend me from the fallacies of imagination; and when I die, it shall be buried in my bosom!" But I strongly dissuaded him from writing to you at present; for it would harrow up your soul to read the wild expressions of his despair.—Yielding to my remonstrances, he has promised to wait till I receive your answer to this relation of

of his sufferings, which he charged me to give you faithfully.——Ah! Adonia, I could almost wish that St. Loudon were less engaging, or that you had never seen him.—To be beloved by such a man as Lord Arunville, yet to be incapable of rewarding his attachment, is, I believe, a situation that few can have experienced!"

CHAP. XXXIV.

——————" See'st thou, Emma,
Yon western clouds? The sun they strive to hide
Yet darts his beams around."

ADONIA was not long permitted to ruminate on her regrets for Lord Arunville, ere she was surprised by a message from the Marquis, requesting the favor of her company in the saloon; and the servant who delivered it informed her that her brothers were arrived. She flew to meet them with a pleasure that vanquished

quished every previous uneasy reflection; and in a moment the two lovely improved boys were in her arms, and half-stifled her with their fond caresses.

The Marquis stood by with a gloomy and impatient air. He soon interrupted the happy scene by a cold inquiry after Adonia's health, and some observations on the improvement of the boys, whom he really loved as much as he disliked and feared their sister. Adonia returned his inquiry with a gentle kindness, that would have softened any heart not jaundiced by prejudice, and gratefully thanked him for his attention in permitting her brothers to visit her. "You are not indebted to me for it, child!" said he: "Your friend, the Comte de l'Avignon, thought proper to dedicate the first hours of his liberty to gratify your wishes; and I hope you will shew that you are not insensible of his kindness when he visits you at dinner." The Comte de

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l'Avignon at liberty!—the Comte de l'Avignon solicitous to gratify her wishes! What sickening words to Adonia! But, in a moment determining on the part she was to pursue, she confined her disgust and alarm to her own bosom, and calmly replied, "I trust I am not insensible to kindness;" and then offered to withdraw. But the Marquis, with an air of more complacency than he commonly wore, requesting her not to leave him so soon, she instantly returned; and, taking out her work, endeavoured to amuse him with the topics of the day, and in examining her brothers, to discover their improvements, by questions on the subject of their studies. The Marquis appeared to take an interest in her desire to divert him, and an hour of painful restraint had passed away with tolerable decorum, when the Comte de l'Avignon was announced. He entered with an assumed appearance of ease and familiarity, and paid his compliments to Adonia with an air

air of intimacy, from which she shrunk with instinctive horror, though she strove to answer him with politeness and unconcern. He saw the anguish that oppressed her through all her efforts at composure, and gave her time to rally back her embarrassment by turning to the boys, who received his caresses with pleasure. "Your sister does not love me as you do, Henry?" whispered he to the youngest, who was now nine years old.—"No! nobody loves you as I do!" replied the boy with innocent vivacity.—"Will you let me be your brother then?"—"No, but I will have you for a father!"

The word *father* vibrated on Adonia's ear, and entered her soul. Indignant anguish kindled in her bosom, and disdain alone restrained the tears that rushed to her eyes. "He has made us orphans!" said she mentally; "but he shall find he cannot make us dupes or slaves!" and, calling Henry to her, she said with a

look full of meaning, while her voice faltered with emotion, "Have you forgotten your father already, Henry?" Seven months had not effaced from Henry's memory the dreadful prison-scene which had filled his young imagination with images replete with horror; and his father's kindness, his father's sufferings, had sunk too deeply into Theodore's heart ever to be obliterated.

They both burst into tears at this appeal; and Adonia, turning to De l'Avignon, said with a steady air, "Poor unconscious children! *their* tears are soon rouzed; *their* wrongs are soon forgotten!" "Amiable sensibility! precious tears!" said De l'Avignon, mistaking her meaning.—"Yes, *precious* tears!" replied she with strong disdain: "they have been *dearly purchased!*" A gloomy cloud passed over De l'Avignon's countenance; but he affected not to feel it; and, going up to the Marquis, he began a disquisition, with pretended

pretended earnestness, on the state of finance, which lasted till dinner was announced; when Adonia with an aching heart, with a spirit revolting against the presence of the contemptible De l'Avignon, suffered herself to be conducted to the *salle à manger* by the Marquis, for the first time since the Marchioness's death. He led her instinctively to the seat which his wife had usually occupied, when their party was confined to the domestic circle. This action produced a sudden change on every countenance, and dinner passed in a gloomy silence on the part of the Marquis, which De l'Avignon durst not, and Adonia felt no disposition to, interrupt. The moment the fruit was removed, Adonia departed with her brothers; and this day passed without disclosing to her any part of the Comte's designs. But the following day he came again, and she was requested by the Marquis to join them; which, to avoid disturbing his lately-assumed complaisance, she again complied

 with

with. For many days she submitted to the same painful constraint. De l'Avignon dined constantly with the Marquis, and strove to maintain that easy familiarity towards Adonia he had commenced with, which she still met with cold but dignified reserve. At length he repeated to her that deceitful offer of his hand and fortune which she had treated with silent disdain at Montpelier, and which he now used as a subterfuge not less necessary to blind the Marquis than to qualify his addresses to herself. She rejected it without haughtiness, but with the most resolute and impressive dignity. From this time, however, she found herself beset by the threats and commands of the Marquis, while the more bold and licentious advances of De l'Avignon now filled her with disgust and alarm; and determined her to yield to the solicitations of her friends in England, in leaving the house of a man from whom she no longer received protection, but oppression. The

worthy

worthy Madame Brumelle, to whom she imparted her distresses, willingly agreed to accompany her to England; and she requested Johanna to hire a small house in any situation she should judge most eligible, as a temporary residence for her until her cousin should have arranged her own plans. To this request she received an answer from Admiral Tracey; who, in a manner at once delicate, friendly, and importunate, entreated her not to embarrass herself at present on this subject, but consider Fort-Mervan as a home ready to receive her, and himself as a guardian who would be gratified and honored by affording her his protection. Adonia now hesitated not a moment. She desired an audience of the Marquis; and, telling him her intentions, requested to know what was his pleasure in regard to her brothers, whom she would either take with her or leave in Paris, as he should judge proper. He listened to her at first with impatient anger, and then with in-

effable contempt. "And by what right, ma'amselle, do you withdraw yourself from my protection?" said he, with an imperious and malignant air. "By the right of nature, of self-dependence!" she replied, unawed by his petrifying looks. "Had you treated me with hospitality, had even the faintest gleam of kindness cheered my heart, I should have forgotten every uneasy circumstance of my situation; and, in deference to the wishes of my venerated benefactress, would have sought no other protector. But, regarded either with freezing coldness or mortifying contempt, and persecuted by commands and menaces which you have no right to use, and to which I can never submit, I am compelled to assert the privilege of oppressed liberty, and with a woman's form to take upon me the independence that custom has assigned to man." "Peace, silly girl!" said he, interrupting her; "and know that this heroic independency is restricted by shackles which you

dare

dare not break! Know, that you are to obey me as your *legal guardian*; and that I am equally answerable for the disposal of your person and your fortune!"

Adonia knew that her *inheritance* was no longer in his hands, and that her father had left no will nor testament of any kind by which the Marquis could formally have been invested with the guardianship of her person or property; she therefore disregarded this seeming subterfuge, and again requested to know whether or not her brothers should accompany her to England? But to her infinite mortification and surprise, with a cold, cutting, and deliberate, air of triumph, he convinced her, that neither she nor her brothers could legally proceed a step without his concurrence: for the King, as a tribute of regard to the memory of her father, or of compassion for their destitute state, had settled on each of De Bellefonde's children a sum of money from his

his private purse, and formally invested the Marquis with the authority of guardianship during their minority. Wondering that she had not been informed of these circumstances before, Adonia now demanded why she had been kept in ignorance of his Majesty's munificence, and withheld from at least testifying her gratitude for the generous kindness of his motives? "For two sufficient reasons!" replied the Marquis: "first, because it was a secret contract between his Majesty and myself; and unnecessary for you to know at the time when it was made: and, secondly, because the King judged it impolitic to divulge this mark of his attachment to the memory of a man who, you well know, was considered, however unjustly, as a violator of the laws of his country, and an enemy to the just rights and liberties of his countrymen!"—For a moment Adonia turned pale and sick with apprehension; but, soon resuming the spirit which his indignities had rouzed, she

she said, "If his Majesty's benevolence induced him to make this provision for me, he surely meant not that I should be oppressed and insulted; and what is it but oppression to attempt to constrain me in the disposal of my heart? What but insult to force me to receive the addresses of a man whom of all others on earth I hold in the greatest contempt and abhorrence? Free me from the persecutions of the Comte de l'Avignon, my Lord! Let my heart unmolestedly enjoy that freedom which no power can wrest from me, and you will find me thankful for your guardianship, and submissive to all your reasonable demands!"—"Adonia!" said the Marquis, putting on an appearance of calm importance, "your dislike of the Comte de l'Avignon cannot be founded on an objection to his person, his rank, or his fortune; and I cannot therefore suffer a girlish prejudice to come in competition with my plighted honor. Empowered as your guardian to dispose

of your hand to the best of my judgement, I promised it to the Comte de l'Avignon before I was acquainted with the violent repugnance which you now discover to this union. His attachment to you is boundless: in prison, in confinement, his separation from you was the chief cause of his distress;—to be united to you, the sole object that urged him to rouze his friends to effect his premature release. Knowing that he has a rival, he trembled for the consequences of delay; and, when by accident I discovered his wishes, and, doubtful of the nature of his views, informed him of my power to dispose of you, he engaged my solemn promise never to consent to your union with another; in the most honorable manner offering you a settlement, as his wife, greater than your fortune could entitle you to expect from a less generous lover. Whatever may be your reluctance to accepting his offers at present, I am confident that your reason must point out

their

their advantages, and that in time your heart will do justice to his merits: but opposition can avail nothing in a measure that is determined on, and you will best guarantee your own interest by submitting with complacency."

Revolt, indignation, and disdain, struggled by turns in Adonia's bosom. She would openly have avowed her determination never to be united to the Comte de l'Avignon; she would have called him the instrument of her father's ruin, and told the Marquis how nature sickened at the thought of mating the daughter with the murderer of the father! but, while she paused to find words proud enough to execrate the unnatural treaty, reason interposed to silence the vain ebullition of impotent complaint, and suggested a safer resource. Calling to mind the King's friendship for her father, and his dislike of De l'Avignon, she determined to seek refuge at *the foot of the throne*; and, put-

ting on an appearance of resignation, she now silently retired. She immediately drew up a petition to King, in which, after pouring forth her gratitude for his generous munificence, she laid before him a simple but affecting statement of the distress she suffered in being compelled to listen to the addresses of a man, whom, if she had not disliked him for himself, she would for ever have detested for his perfidy to her father. Without accusing the Marquis of unkindness, she entreated that his Majesty would interpose to prevent this union; which she merely said the Marquis *authorised*, by taking away his right to dispose of her without her own consent. She told him of her wish to go England, where she was urgently invited to take up her residence among her mother's friends: she implored his sanction to her departure, which, she said, the Marquis seemed determined to oppose, from believing that his honor was engaged to the Comte de l'Avignon: she begged leave to decline

decline his generous donation for herself, being placed by the liberal bequests of her friends above pecuniary want; but intreated his protection for her brothers, should it be judged proper for them to remain at Paris: she implored his Majesty's pardon for having presumed to trouble him with this appeal, and then concluded with the usual forms.—Having written and re-written it several times, ere she could satisfy herself with proper expressions, she finished; and, having sealed it, got Madame Brumelle to transmit it, as from herself, to Versailles, by a messenger on whom she could rely. In two days she received the following gracious reply:—

"It grieves me sincerely that the lovely child of my ever-lamented friend, De Bellefonde, should have found it necessary to appeal from the power of those whom I invested with her guardianship; and it distresses me still more, that I cannot easily grant her the redress which she demands.

mands. The Comte de l'A. is not the husband whom I would have chosen for you, but he is at the head of a powerful faction, over which at present I have no authority, and which I must avoid exasperating, until my own measures are ripe for execution.—Beloved daughter of my venerated friend, you may well conceive the urgency of the motives that could have withheld me from crushing the persecutors of your father, ere they could have effected his downfall! Think how critical must be the situation of a monarch, who could see his best and dearest friend sacrificed to the intrigues of a lawless faction without daring to interpose, and you will not wonder that I hesitate to comply with your requests openly! But what I *can* do to serve you I will, though we must submit to disguise, to effect even this with security.—If you can find means to elope from the Hôtel d'E. without creating suspicion that *I* am your accessary, the messenger who will give you this, and who is a man I can trust, shall be

be empowered to conduct you in safety to England. You may depend upon my interest being used to forward the welfare of your brothers, who could not easily be made the partners of your flight. They are not liable to the same dangers, by remaining here, that threaten you; nor am I so limited in my power to befriend *them*, as your too-unfortunate charms for De l'A. render me in regard to *you*. Let me have your answer immediately, and my agent shall receive his instructions accordingly."

After consulting with Madame Brumelle, at whose house she received the King's messenger, she hastily wrote a reply, dictated by the warmest gratitude; in which she joyfully accepted the King's proposal, and entreated that it might immediately be put into effect: and she added a request that she might be permitted to be accompanied by her old and faithful governess, whom she could not

bear

bear to leave a dependent on the precarious bounty of the Marquis. She then returned home, and passed the rest of the day with the Marquis and De l'Avignon, tranquil and unsuspected. The Marquis felt no surprise at her apparent submission. He was but a slow observer of the human mind; and entertained so mean an opinion of women in general, their vanity, and their caprices, that, excepting his wife, whose superiority was too commanding not to enforce respect, he did not believe that there ever had existed a woman who might not be subdued by flattery, or bribed by splendor, to renounce the most cherished wishes of the heart.—De l'Avignon was of the same way of thinking, without any exception whatever; and, well acquainted as he was with Adonia's superiority of understanding, the delicacy and refinement of her sentiments, and her acute penetration into the characters of others, he did not admit a doubt that she would one day be the dupe of his flatteries, and

even

even the contented victim of his disgraceful passion; which, notwithstanding his offers to the Marquis of a splendid and honorable settlement for his ward, he never intended to gratify by submitting to the shackles of marriage.

He now fancied he saw unusual encouragement in Adonia's looks and manner. The hope, the certainty, of being on the morrow delivered for ever from his hateful presence, and on the road to those friends whose heart-cheering welcome would repay her for all that she had suffered from the Marquis's stern unkindness, gave new lustre to her eyes, and new gaiety to her heart; and, though the thought of parting from her brothers now and then shaded this vivacity, she was too sensible of the importance of regaining her liberty to dwell long on any painful images. While secretly exulting in the idea that she was viewing De l'Avignon for the last time, careless of the present,

present, she permitted him to lead the conversation to whatever topic he chose, neither reproving his flatteries nor repulsing his attentions.—De l'Avignon was in raptures; and the Marquis, occupied by other thoughts, only observed, in a general way, that Adonia was in better spirits than usual; and once coldly joined the conversation to say, on the Comte's appealing to him, "that she looked better than she had done for some time." De l'Avignon thought he had never beheld her so infinitely lovely! Her beauty, indeed, now shone in its most attractive graces. Though she had lost much of the blooming appearance of perfect health and unclouded vivacity which she had brought with her from Montpelier, the downy beauty of her delicately-reddened cheeks could hardly have been improved by an additional colouring; and her dark-blue eyes, though now more serene than brilliant, could not have conveyed more eloquently their meaning to the heart.

heart. Her tall figure was at once soft and commanding; though, had its proportions been less delicate, or her movements less graceful, her height, like her unfortunate mother's, would have been too commanding for feminine beauty.—But the soft and harmonious features of her face, the transparent skin, the musical voice, and the benignant smile, were all charms peculiarly feminine,—all united to render her loveliness gentle and attractive.

It was not till late that she retired to her chamber for the night. Anxious to prevent suspicion, she willingly submitted to the Comte's desire of detaining her; and he parted from her at length, fully persuaded that a very few weeks, or months at most, would give this capricious beauty to his arms;—this capricious beauty, who, in the moment when he imagined her ruminating on his attractions, and striving to reconcile her pride with her tenderness, was

eagerly

eagerly reading in her chamber a billet from Madame Brumelle, on the subject of her meditated flight. It was as follows:—"And so I must lay my old bones in a foreign land, after all I have seen and suffered! and burden you with the care of the old sapless tree which sheltered you in your infancy, now that it is grown withered and crazy, and fit for nothing but to be hewn down and cast into the fire! But every thing has its season. I have seen the day when I could have run my pen as nimbly over the paper, and selected as many choice expressions to make a flowery letter of, as the best of you; but now I am obliged to put on my double-spectacles, and to write at intervals; for my fingers are quite stiff, and my sight as dim as needs be; or I would have told you before now, that you have no time to lose. To-morrow morning by four o'clock the King's gentleman is to have a post-coach ready for us at the back gate of the park, and you must not fail

to

to be at my house in time. He is to accompany us all the way, till we are safely landed on the Isle of-Wight. Do not trouble yourself much about dress; there will be nobody to see you, you know, except this gentleman; though, to be sure, if he were of the noblesse, he is as fine portly a figure of a man as one would wish to see, and has a pleasing voice. But he is not of your rank, you know!—and I beg you will wrap yourself well up, and take a wine-glass full of the cordial I send you, before you encounter the sharp morning-air: it is of my own making, and a good preventative against cold. And I hope you will not distress yourself about parting with your brothers; you had better not disturb them, poor things! They will be sound asleep in bed, and your going in to kiss them will only look suspicious. Any little matter you may have to bring with you, you must endeavour to carry hither yourself; for I dare not send any body, for fear of being

being seen. Now, my dear child, remember to be careful of not catching cold; for, if we are laid up on the road, what will become of us? Good night, God bless you! I had almost forgotten to mention that you ought to go to bed early, and endeavour to get a sound sleep, to strengthen you for the journey."

Adonia kissed this prolix *hurried* epistle with grateful rapture; and, desiring the woman who waited for her reply to tell Madame Brumelle that she would attend to her instructions, she wished her a good night. Shutting the door of her room, she sat down to ruminate on the wide untrodden path that lay before her, until she judged by the stillness which reigned throughout the house, that all the family were retired to rest. She then stole softly to the apartment of her brothers, whom she found wrapped in a calm and profound sleep; and, holding her taper over the bed, indulged herself

for

for some minutes alternately in contemplating the serene beauty of their placid and unconscious countenances, while *she* was perhaps gazing on them for the last time!—The idea thrilled her heart with agony unutterable; and she now felt that the anguish of parting can never be conceived till the moment when it arrives. Her resolution was quite overpowered: she placed the taper on the ground, and, throwing herself on a chair, gave way to her emotions without controul. In that moment she felt as if she could have abandoned all her projects, rather than tear herself away from these sweet innocent links on affections which had no other object; these beloved remembrancers of happy days and fond attachments, which would now be in danger of no more even replying to the questions of memory! Her sighs, her audible sobs, and the burning tears which she shed upon their faces, at length disturbed their peaceful sleep. Theodore started

started up alarmed, and inquired what had happened to her; and the little Henry, less subject to controul, gave a loud exclamation of surprise and terror, which in a moment recalled her recollection to the necessity of being more cautious. She found, however, that she could not trust her voice with any apology for her tears; and, after some fruitless efforts to restrain them, she kissed her brothers hastily, and hurried back to her apartment. She had not remained there many minutes, when, with indescribable alarm, she heard the sound of footsteps moving softly along the adjoining gallery; and had hardly time to form a conjecture on the singularity of any one being up at this unusual hour, (for it was now near three o'clock,) when her door was attempted to be opened; and, hardly knowing what she did, with a beating heart she hastily extinguished the light. She soon found that poor Theodore was the cause of her alarm.—Distressed and

frightened

frightened by the agitation in which he had seen his sister, he could not rest till he had inquired the cause; and now in a soft whispering voice entreated her to open the door, which she had locked at her entrance. Cruel agonizing entreaty! to prolong the moments of a parting so full of affectionate sorrow. "Theodore, my love!" said she, at length recovering her presence of mind, "I cannot let you in,—indeed I cannot! Go to bed again, my dear brother, and let no thoughts of me disturb you." "Ah, sister!" whispered he, "you are not well; I could not bear that any thing evil should befal you! Why did you weep so, when you kissed us?" "Hush!" said she: "You know I have at all times too much reason to be sad. We shall disturb the Marquis, my love, and I must insist upon your going away. Good night, my darling brother! Farewell, farewell! May heaven bless and preserve you!" "O my sister! you are not going to leave us, that you say

say so sadly farewell?" cried he, trembling. "Surely you will not forsake us, and not tell us where you are going?" "This is too much!" cried Adonia, wringing her hands. "O Theodore, if you knew how you distress me! Why should you think I would leave you? what childish fancies! —But go to bed directly!" said she, assuming a tone of anger, while her heart was wrung by excess of tenderness: "I am both surprised and angry with you!" He then reluctantly and fearfully withdrew, alarmed by the idea of offending a sister who was usually all gentleness and love. Adonia now recollected, with a terror which called away her thoughts from her brother to herself, that, by so hastily extinguishing her candle, she had perhaps deprived herself of the means of preparing for her departure; and if she waited for day-light, her escape might be for ever frustrated! She was well acquainted with every part of the house, and could have little doubt of finding her way to the door

door through which she intended to let herself out; but the danger of alarming the family by proceeding without any light to guide her; the uncertainty of being able, when she reached it, to open this important door, which was fastened within by a spring-lock of curious and difficult mechanism, hardly to be discovered by an uninformed observer even in the day-time; and the recollection that she could not easily find either her jewels or her clothes, on the former of which depended her present means of defraying any expences she might incur; filled her with the most unpleasant apprehensions.

Whilst perplexing herself with these, a new subject of alarm occurred to her. She forgot what she had done with Madame Brumelle's note; which, if found, would not only betray her route, but expose her generous and royal friend to that discovery of his being accessary to her

her flight which he seemed so solicitous to avoid.—She searched her pockets with trembling eagerness, and brought out several papers, none of which seemed to be the one she sought. Persuaded that she must have dropped it, she anxiously groped for it over every part of her chamber, but it was no where to be found; and she durst not a second time venture to the apartment of her brothers. Yielding, therefore, to the sickly fancies which are apt to accumulate the anxieties of a mind enervated by fear, she imagined that the hope so lately held out to her was for ever blasted; for she immediately determined to brave every misfortune which might attend her remaining in France, rather than requite the King's generosity by embroiling him with the lawless faction on her account; or, by setting out under her present uncertainty, leave a probability of the whole affair being discovered by the

the testimony of the letter she had so unfortunately lost.

In a state of calm but confirmed despair, she seated herself on the bed; and, revolving in her mind a thousand distressing thoughts, bent her eyes on the dark gloomy horizon, unillumined by a single star, till she heard the clock strike three. Another hour, and it would be too late even to lament! But her fears had greatly exaggerated every dangerous circumstance, and rendered her forgetful of those that might have afforded hope; for, before the clock had again repeated its alarum, morning began to dawn, and she found light enough to distinguish the objects around her, though indistinctly. With a revived heart she immediately set about attempting to find such things as were of most importance to carry with her, that she might at least be prepared, in case of being able to find Madame Bru-

melle's letter, before it was too late; and in a great measure she succeeded. The box that contained her jewels was easily distinguished, as soon as she had light enough to apply the key to the lock of the cabinet where it was deposited; and, as they were already sufficiently well packed, she had only to get together a few necessary articles of apparel. But *this* was not so easily effected; and the mistakes she made, added to the hurry of her mind, kept her almost fruitlessly employed till the clock struck four. She then wrapped herself up in her travelling dress, determined to abandon all care for the rest; and, drawing close to the window, she once more took from her pocket all the papers they contained, and resumed her ineffectual search for the lost letter. It was not among them, nor any where in the apartment; and with desperate resolution she now boldly returned to her brothers' chamber, at the door of which

which she found the lost paper; and, on bringing it to the light, was perfectly convinced of its identity. Unhesitatingly she now took up her box of jewels and a few loose articles of apparel, and, light as a shadow, made her movement to the outer door in safety, which after some difficulty she opened. In a few minutes she was seated in the carriage, and conveyed rapidly away from danger, from misery, from the Comte de l'Avignon!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ah! lost those charms that once such fame had won,
Like gather'd roses fading in the sun!

HOOLE'S ARIOSTO.

ADONIA found their fellow-traveller a sensible intelligent man, whose lively conversation prevented her thoughts from dwelling on any subject of painful retrospection, and whose attention and respectful politeness softened many of the inconveniences of a journey that seemed by its rapidity to be performed on wings of wind. The carriage was stored with every

every necessary refreshment, and they did not quit it till their arrival at Havre-de-Grace; where, no longer fearful of being overtaken, they determined to allow themselves at least a day's rest before they should attempt crossing the water; for poor Madame Brumelle, exhausted by the unusual fatigue of having passed two days and nights without sleep, was so much overcome, that the moment she got out of the carriage she fainted away. Adonia, though less exhausted, being supported by the vigour of a sanguine and elastic mind, was easily brought to confess that this delay was a seasonable respite; and she determined to avail herself of it, to apprize her friends at Fort-Mervan of the nearness of her approach. She had during the journey suffered much uneasiness from the fear of distressing Lord Arunville by an abrupt and unexpected arrival; who, though she had written to Johanna the positive rejection of his hopes, which was to determine his

resignation of them, could not, she thought, have already overcome a disappointment which he seemed to express with such extreme anguish, so as to meet her either with indifference or composure. Her precaution was, however, rendered ineffectual by the enattention of the people with whom she entrusted her letter, which was not brought to Fort-Mervan till two days after her own arrival.—The gentleman, Monsieur Lemoigne, who accompanied them, would not be prevailed on to leave them at Havre, although Adonia, judging it unnecessary to exact his farther attendance, and fearing that delay might endanger his return to Paris, assured him they were now free from all apprehension of being overtaken, and felt no alarm at the idea of crossing the water without the protection of a male companion, as they were provided with a good vessel, and the appearance of the weather promised them a safe and speedy passage. But he had received orders

from

from the King not to leave her till she was safely landed in England, and his native gallantry would not have allowed him at any rate to yield to these representations, when a young and beautiful female was the object of his care. On the fourth morning, therefore, from their leaving Paris, he attended them on board the little vessel which he had hired for the purpose; and before noon they came in view of the Isle of Wight. There was a landing-place that led immediately to Admiral Tracey's house; and, as it was at this season perfectly safe, they preferred bringing too there, to the unnecessary delay of going into any of the public harbours. Miss Tracey and Johanna, invited by the fineness of the weather, were out riding when they arrived. The Admiral was inspecting some operations of his tenants on a distant farm; and Lord Arunville, seated with a book in his hand at a window that commanded the sea, was the only one to

 notice

notice their landing. He had been some days expecting the arrival of his brother, who was lately returned to England; and, as the distance was too great to allow of his distinguishing accurately, he did not doubt that the visitors who had arrived were Mr. Grybton, accompanied by two of his sisters, none of whom had yet been to visit him since the commencement of his illness; and Monsieur Lemoigne's height and figure confirmed the belief. He therefore went to meet them as they advanced, and with slow and languid steps had gained the outer gate of the shrubbery that opened towards the sea, when his throbbing heart recognized Adonia! Faint and breathless, he was forced to stop, and allow her to make up to him. She had not seen him for some time previous to his departure from Montpelier; and, prepared as she was to find an alteration in his appearance, the thin emaciated figure that stood before her; the hollow rayless eyes, once sparkling

ling with brilliant animation, which now met hers with a look of such sad and hopeless anguish as not even the pleasure of seeing her again could for a moment illuminate; the idea, that she herself had wrought this change; and the reflection that she was but come to increase by her presence sufferings she could not alleviate; created in her bosom a combination of sensations which rendered her utterly incapable of speaking to him; and, after some moments of strong internal emotion, she burst into tears. He took her hand tremulously, and pressed it to his lips.—Loveliest and best of women!" said he, with much agitation, "how I thank you for these generous tears, for the sufferings of a being so indifferent, so lost! But tell me to what I am to ascribe the unlooked-for happiness of seeing you here at present, when I had reason to suppose you so far distant?" "Did not you hear then?" replied Adonia: "Did not Admiral Tracey receive the letter

letter I wrote him from Havre, to prevent the surprise of my sudden appearance among you?"—"You are ever kind and considerate, Mademoiselle de Rosier," replied he, sighing; "but I assure you, you have deprived none of us of the additional happiness of seeing you unexpectedly; for it was only this morning that I heard the Admiral express his surprise at your silence: and he and the ladies are so little conscious of the pleasure that awaits them, that they are at present all from home." "And could they leave you thus?" thought Adonia; without considering that they must be familiarized to the death-like appearance which was so painfully striking to her. "But you have not answered my question?" continued he with some eagerness: "No new misfortune, no perplexity, that can threaten the security or retard the happiness of the most lovely and deserving of her sex, has, I hope, brought Mademoiselle de Rosier thus unexpectedly hither?"

hither?"—But, as if suddenly recollecting the presence of the strangers, or sickening at the thought that what constituted her happiness was probably the destruction of his own, he hastily prevented her reply by some other questions of less interest; and they all entered the house.

Monsieur Lemoigne would only stay to take some refreshment; for, as the wind was moderate, and in his favor, he judged it best to return immediately; and Adonia, who knew and felt all the motives of his haste, did not offer to detain him longer. She bade him adieu with the most flattering expressions of esteem; though not till she had given him a short letter for the King, expressive of the warm gratitude that filled her heart towards her benevolent and royal benefactor.—He had hardly been gone many minutes before she saw him hastily returning; and, re-entering the apartment in breathless agitation,

agitation, he entreated her pardon for an omission he had been guilty of in neglecting to perform the King's last injunction. He then put into her hand a packet inclosing a flattering billet from his Majesty, intreating her acceptance of the miniature-picture of himself which accompanied it, and a purse containing five hundred Louis-d'ors, which he had directed Lemoigne to convert into English money at Havre; but which poor Lemoigne, occupied by the charms of *la belle demoiselle De Rosier, qu'il trouvoit si charmante*, had entirely forgotten, till on the point of carrying the packet back unopened.

Penetrated by these new marks of the King's attachment to her family, Adonia knew not how to express the oppressive gratitude which she felt. "Ah! Monsieur Lemoigne, your royal master overwhelms me by these proofs of friendship!" said she, blushing, and kissing the picture.

ture. "*Maintenant, elles sont mille fois remboursé!*" said Lemoigne. "Tell him," said Adonia, "that I will wear his picture next my heart; that, if the world contemn, or friends forsake, me, I may look on it, and exult in the remembrance, that the King of France was my friend!" "*Ah! mademoiselle,*" replied Lemoigne, with an animated air, "*qui est ce qui peut être autre que l'ami d'une personne qui mérite non seulement d'être aimé, mais aussi d'être adorée?*" and, kissing respectfully the hand she held out to him, he hurried away.

Madame Brumelle, whose looks sufficiently testified the necessity of repose, now entreated leave to be conducted to her chamber; and Lord Arunville, ringing the bell, desired that the housekeeper might be called to attend the ladies to their apartments; as they withdrew, he whispered to Adonia,—"*You* are not going to lie down; will you return to me?

When

When our friends come home, I may not have an opportunity of speaking to you alone before I leave Fort-Mervan; and I have something to say,—a weight upon my heart, Mademoiselle de Rosier, that you only can remove by listening to me with patience, with pity. Do not, do not, refuse me, this last request!" continued he, observing that she hesitated: "I will try not to wound your too-feeling heart; and I promise, solemnly promise, that, if you command me, it shall be the last time I will ever distress you with this subject."—"I will return to you," said Adonia faintly, and withdrew with Madame Brumelle. When she had seen her good old friend in bed, she seated herself for a few minutes, in order to calm her thoughts, and prepare for supporting her conference with Lord Arunville composedly.

Perhaps a young and innocent female is not capable of more agonizing sensa-

tions

tions than those inflicted by the consciousness of causing the misery of an estimable being who loves her. Remorse, however causeless, is mingled with pity; and a degree of vanity, from which the best are not always exempted, exaggerates the ruin it contemplates. Lord Arunville's wretchedness could not, however, be too highly coloured by the most gloomy fancy; and his drooping, his death-like, appearance,—the mournful change from sprightliness and health to rooted melancholy and wasting disease,—exhibited a wreck which Adonia could not contemplate without horror. Her pity could not deny him the confidence he demanded, though her heart sickened at the thought of hearing his passionate description of a despair which needed not words to demonstrate it: but she was assisted by the reflection, that it was her duty to put an end to any vain hopes he might still be disposed to cherish; she therefore stifled, as much as possible, the

tumultuous

tumultuous emotions that beset her, and returned to the room where she had left him. "Ah, Mademoiselle de Rosier!" said he, rising at her approach, and conducting her to a seat beside his own, "you are all goodness and condescension! Though I have little room for hope, your generous pity sooths and flatters me!" "Pity, my Lord," said Adonia faintly, without knowing what she intended to say,—"pity, my Lord, is an involuntary emotion—" "Then I owe it not to your esteem, to that fondly-believed friendship which I have striven to persuade myself would indemnify me for the loss of your heart?" cried Lord Arunville, hastily interrupting her. "It depends upon yourself, my Lord," said Adonia, "to confirm the esteem I feel for you, by shewing that you are not unreasonable. Johanna must have told you my reasons for declining that warmer regard which you were pleased to honour me with; but my friendship, my warmest

est esteem, are yours, if you will only shew me that you do not think them unworthy your acceptance, by banishing the romantic illusions that weaken your reason, and prey upon your health."—"Oh! teach me then how to banish them!" cried Lord Arunville wildly, "and I will obey you,—joyfully obey my magical instructress!—But no, Adonia! the attempt is vain. No human means can ever extinguish in my bosom the dreams of felicity which, though forbidden to be realized, must continue to haunt my imagination to the close of existence. I have tried it, vainly tried it! Fettered by my engagements to another, I saw at once that honor and duty opposed insurmountable barriers to the intrusive passion which had stolen upon my heart; and, heaven is my witness! no argument of reason, no effort of fortitude, did I leave unessayed to conquer the destructive enchantment! The long silence which I imposed upon myself, while the fatal secret hung every moment

moment on my lips, impatient for utterance, may inform you what were my struggles. Night after night did I count in sleepless anguish the heavy hours as they passed by, yet the day never heard me breathe a murmur. I have numbered every star above the nightly horizon, to withdraw my thoughts from that brighter radiance which blazed to my destruction; or, flying for refuge to the studies which could once engross me, have laboured to quell the turbulence of fancy in the deepest mazes of abstruse speculation.

"I sought the aid of variety; I plunged into the vortex of gaiety, of licentious dissipation; there, even there, Adonia still haunted me! Her image rose before me, arrayed in all its innocence and loveliness, to reprove the mad expedient, and substitute remorse; while her benignant gentleness fanned my delusive hopes; renewed the vain, the impetuous, wishes which still impelled me to seek her society,

ciety, to cherish her idea, to nurse for myself only the realities of anguish and disappointment." After a few moments' pause, which Adonia had not courage to interrupt,—"Would to God! Adonia," he continued, "that I had never known you; or that I had known you earlier, while your heart was yet free,—before I was restricted by a hateful engagement, which is now dissolved too late! But is it then indeed too late? Was your heart really given to another at the time when the wretched Arunville felt all your enchantments, yet was restricted from disclosing himself?—Ah! Adonia, say, and complete my wretchedness, did there not once exist a possibility favourable to my wishes?" "My Lord," said Adonia, interrupting him, "this is not the calmness, the fortitude, which you promised me when I yielded to your request of coming hither to listen to you. I expected at least that you would have spared my feelings, though you may have no pity

pity for your own. If I am only to listen to unmanly complaints, and vain repetitions of what ought long ere now to have been fully understood and resolutely combated, I must insist on leaving you; though let me first silence any expectations which you may wilfully be inclined to cherish, by repeating from my own lips, *that I never can be yours!* that my choice, my affection, are given to another!"—"Enough!" said Lord Arunville with a heavy groan: "You need fear no farther intrusion from my wretchedness!—Never, never more shall your delicate and susceptible mind be shocked by the vain ravings of my despair!" Large drops, extorted by anguish too exquisite for suppression, now rushed impetuously from his eyes; and Adonia, shocked and terrified, had not power to leave him, though she dreaded to remain. At length, with more composure, he continued:—"If you are happy, Adonia, shall I not be so? Can I be selfish and unrea-

unreasonable enough to repine at what constitutes the happiness of her for whom I could joyfully sacrifice existence? Oh no, Adonia, I will not repine! May you be united to the fortunate man whom you honor with your choice! May every prosperity be yours that can arise from the fruition of all your wishes, though the wretched Arunville is not destined to witness the felicity which proves fatal to his own!—Adonia, I feel the progress of disease with pleasure. Even were you to reverse the sentence you have just pronounced, it could not now, perhaps, save me from the decree of nature!—My physicians give me little hope, and I have no wish to recover.—Could I hope that with returning health I should find returning tranquillity, I should still desire to live, that I might fulfil my part in society with some benefit to others; that I might put into execution that scheme of usefulness which brought me back to England, in the vain expectation of fitting my mind to

to accomplish the harder part that was then to perform.—But my heart tells me that its tranquillity can never be regained! and how could a mind enfeebled and engrossed by its own miseries take an interest in the wretchedness of others, or attempt to impart that consolation which is for ever denied to itself?—Adonia, you will shed tears upon my grave; you will perhaps bend over it, and say, "Would I could have saved him!" But weep not, mourn not! I shall then be happy in a clime where passion can no longer assail me;—where even the loveliest and best of women will only be looked back upon as a fellow-being, though she now appears to a bewildered fancy of a nature that transcends mortality!" "Cruel, cruel!" cried Adonia, clasping her hands together in agony, while the tears which she had long ceased to controul flowed in more tumultuous torrents.—"Ah!" cried Lord Arunville, "cruel, barbarous, indeed! to torture the sensibility of a bosom made up

up of tenderness and pity!—Oh! pardon me, Adonia!" cried he, attempting to take her hand, which she resolutely withheld from him; "forgive these ungenerous transports of a passion which your presence ought to restrain; and do not complete the misery you have created by shewing me that you despise my weakness, or execrate my unmanly cruelty!"

"Alas!" faltered Adonia, overcome by the anguish and dread of having offended her which his countenance, not less than his words, strongly expressed, "Alas! to what purpose shall I say I pardon you, when you are alike inattentive to my lenity or my harshness?—Why, why, my Lord," continued she, with more firmness, "do you allow yourself to yield to such visionary ideas? To talk of death as a desirable object, while in the possession of youth, of friends, of fortune, —all that can enable you to make the noblest uses of existence, except health, which you yourself wantonly throw

away,—argues a weakness of mind, a perversion of reason, which I know does not really belong to Lord Arunville! You deceive yourself if you imagine that either restored health or tranquillity may not be yours by a proper application of that fortitude which you seem wilfully to abandon. The passion you describe never yet outlived the expectations that nourish it longer than we ourselves determine. Our wishes are bounded by our hopes, my Lord; and all of cherished longing beyond the decision of hope is wilful blindness, romantic illusion! I think you are not capable of being designedly culpable; and, when you reflect on the misery in which the carelessness of your health may involve a whole family, who have entrusted so much of their happiness and the dignity of their name with you, I am persuaded that you will soon learn to add firmness of mind to that rectitude of principle which even now condemns *yours* as an almost guilty weakness.

ness. That weakness too, of which we all so loudly complain, is more imaginary than real.—We imagine ourselves weak, because we have never tried our strength; and want courage to begin a scrutiny which we are sensible would expose the fallacy of our favourite delusions. But the truly-noble mind disdains such a disgraceful supineness. It throws off the yoke of a timidity so ill-founded the moment it is convinced of the propriety of exertion; and the task of self-conquest, once resolutely begun, becomes hourly less arduous, when reason is disenchanted, and permitted to resume her sway."—"Angelic monitress!" cried Lord Arunville; "and is it thus you would teach me fortitude, by displaying at every word some new charm of the blessing I am commanded to renounce? Would you instruct me to shake off the dominion of fancy, with a voice of such sweet music as fancy herself employs when she seeks most to enchant? Do you hope that I can

cease to love you, while you are every moment entwining yourself more firmly round my heart? But, shrink not from my gaze! I will prove that I am not unworthy of your friendship; I will exert that fortitude which you admonish! That benevolent solicitude for my health, that generous zeal for my mental recovery, shall not be wasted on obstinate resistance. I will struggle against every thought that can recal the dreams of the past; and here, adorned as you are with all the lustre of beauty, all the graces of intellect and virtue, this is the last time that I will even look on these graces, these virtues, with a lover's eye!" "Ah! that was spoken like Lord Arunville!" cried Adonia, giving him the hand which she had so long denied. "And now, my Lord, let this distressing conference end for ever!—Severely do I reproach myself for the false pity that induced me to submit to it; for, while I listened to you, I was sensible that I was but encouraging

fruitless

fruitless complaints, and weakening instead of soothing you.—But we are now both tranquillized; and let us enter into a treaty never again to make *the past* the subject of our conversation." "Once again before you cease," cried Lord Arunville falteringly,—" pardon my weakness yet a while!—May I not be informed who is the happy, the fortunate, possessor of Adonia's heart? Does he know himself so blest? Is your *hand* too engaged?" "I will tell you all hereafter," replied Adonia: "at present we must enter upon no farther details. It is by dwelling upon our distresses in the moments of languor that we increase and perpetuate them, by laying up for future contemplation a store of recollected sensations, more poignant than real, of which we remember only the bitterness, and from which we derive a precedent for fresh melancholy indulgences. Think not, talk not, of those obstacles to our wishes that are insurmountable, and regret must

 quickly

quickly vanish.—But I fear," continued she, observing that he was eager to interrupt her, "that we often mislead ourselves, and heighten our disappointments, by calculating upon the supposition that we might have avoided them. We dwell on *possibilities*, which we think might have been improved, and wilfully double what is real in our affliction by a vain retrospection of *chances* barely probable."—"Oh yes!" cried Lord Arunville vehemently: "Those fatal excursions of fancy (if you will call them so) which harrow up the soul with hopeless representations of what is, contrasted with *what might have been!*—those visionary, yet cherished, thoughts, which expatiate on a possibility till it grows to completion in the eye of fancy, and then leave the heart more desolate than before;—such are the ruminations which embitter wretchedness, and impede the return of peace! This fatal *contrast* perpetually arises in the minds of the unhappy,—*what might have been!* Adonia hangs upon the

the memory of disappointment like the breath of pestilence, and every hope that would glance towards the future becomes tainted by its poison." "And is this, my Lord," cried Adonia, shuddering, and vainly endeavouring to conceal her tears, "is this the firmness, the fortitude, you promised me? But allow me to ask you, what are those suppositions from whence *you* draw your plea for exaggerating a disappointment which is in itself poor, and doubly trifling compared to what *I* have suffered, who mourn not, complain not! You trifle with my feelings as if you thought me incapable of feeling! Because I make no parade of sufferings which I know to be irremediable, you forget that I have cause to be more wretched than yourself! But, since your weakness obliges me to make the declaration, know, Lord Arunville, that my heart *never could* have been yours, had we even met before that engagement of yours which you blame as the cause of your disappointment!"— Lord Arun-

 ville

ville started, and his pale cheeks were crossed by a strong hectic.—"Yes, my Lord, my affections were, though unconsciously, bestowed upon another before I ever saw you!—When I find you reasonable enough to be entrusted with such a confidence, I will relate to you the particulars of an engagement which, though only formed in my own breast, is binding enough on my part to exclude for ever the possibility of change."

In saying thus much, Adonia found that she had betrayed more than was calculated to produce the effect she wished.—She saw Lord Arunville's curiosity forcibly awakened; and feared that the acknowledgment of her having entered into no promise with her lover might again revive his visionary hope. She was not ignorant of the nobleness of his nature, and that, knowing St. Loudon, he could not but acknowledge the worth of his rival, and do justice to her sense

of

of it; hence, after a short debate with her own feelings, she determined to impart to him at once the whole particulars of her attachment and her prospects.—By seeming to seek his sympathy and advice, she invested him at once with that friendship to which he must hereafter confine his wishes; and, by shewing him her confidence in his generosity, she knew that she could most effectually secure it. She, therefore, with a modesty, with a bashful ingenuousness, which borrowed none of its timidity from the false shame of desiring to hide a pure and innocent partiality for an object who deserved all her tenderness and amply repaid it, related to Lord Arunville the first dawnings of her attachment for St. Loudon; how it had grown upon her unconsciously, even before she knew that it was returned; how she had endeavoured to combat it, when she discovered its danger, or suspected its fruitlessness; how St. Loudon had at length drawn from her

her the secret of her heart, by declaring his own; and that, whatever might be the issue of the business he was now engaged in, (of which Lord Arunville had been already informed,) she was still ready to share that fortune with him which he had once rejected. She told him of the little success he had met with in his expectations from the Comte de l'Avignon; and that, having given up all hopes of recovering the papers that were in the Abbé Poverlerie's possession, he now depended solely on the testimony of those left by Lord Stavordale in the hands of Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

By treating Lord Arunville with this friendly and open confidence, she indeed employed the most certain means of at once silencing for ever his hopeless and illusive wishes, and of engaging his most disinterested good offices. He heard her not, however, without the keenest anguish; for the knowledge that her affections

tions were placed on an object so engaging and estimable as St. Loudon was a farther conviction that they were indeed hopeless to him; but, when a few minutes had calmed the turbulence of his thoughts, he felt grateful for her flattering confidence, and almost disposed to rejoice in those prospects of her happiness which *he believed* so fatal to his own: yet Lord Arunville deceived himself when he imagined that he was of a temper to remain long a prey to despondency. Though ardent and sanguine in all his pursuits, he never abandoned them wholly, while there remained the least shadow for hope to grasp at: he was easily reconciled to disappointment when irretrievable, and equally ready to embark in new designs. Though even his engagement to Mademoiselle d'Argneau had not checked his passion for Adonia, while the distant date prescribed for its fulfilment, and that young lady's well-known inconstancy, suggested a latent hope,

hope, (which the mistake he had adopted respecting Adonia tended to encourage,) he was no sooner convinced from her own lips of her preference of another, and that he himself had really never been the object of partiality, than his torturing doubts, his destructive wishes, subsided into a calm, which, though for the present it wore the appearance of settled despondency, was but the prelude of confirmed resignation, and of the adoption of new pursuits. His ardent and active mind, unable to rest without an object, was never really endangered but by doubt and suspence; and the assurance, that Adonia could never be his, acted as the best restorative to tranquillize his spirits, and prepare him for new wishes and new hopes.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

O senseless heedless libertine, beware!
The glow of shame, with which thou paint'st the cheek
Of trusting innocence, kindles and lives
To take its place on thine, when youth and health,
Gay thoughts and-high fed vanities, shall be
Thy flatt'ring friends no more!"

IT is unnecessary to describe the joyful surprise which met Miss Fitzwilliam and Fanny Tracey on their return from their ride. The latter could hardly make her inquiries rapidly enough after Mademoiselle de Rosier's health and adventures since they parted, or content herself with a suf-

a sufficient number of warm expressions of welcome; and the former hung round her neck in fond and silent tears. Admiral Tracey likewise saluted her with the most flattering demonstrations of regard, and repeated his hope that she would consider his house as her home. He received the worthy Madame Brumelle with kindness and welcome; and paid the most minute attention to every thing which could contribute to their comfort and accommodation. His fortune was as large as his mind was liberal; and his hospitable and convivial disposition rendered his house the gay resort of the young, the witty, the splendid, and the fashionable. Though he was always offending some of his guests by the abrupt sallies of an irritable temper, which he had never been accustomed to controul, he had the art of as quickly reconciling them to him again, by holding out the olive-branch of restored urbanity with the irresistible force of good-humoured wit; and

and by his genuine friendship and benevolence, which ever shone conspicuous even in the midst of his most intemperate paroxysms of passion.—His domestics and dependents were all grown old in his service; for, though they trembled at his frown, he was never betrayed into unreasonable anger without immediately and amply repairing the injustice; and his kindness and affability at other times fully repaid and demanded their fidelity and love. He was the friend and beneficent patron of all around him. Deeply sympathising with the miseries of the poor, yet *resolved* not to encourage the idleness of the vagrant, he was at once the terror and the dupe of every strolling beggar who accosted him: for, while he blustered at his idleness, and told him that poverty was his just reward, he seldom or ever dismissed the drooping and dejected mendicant without privately slipping into his hands a salvo for his words.

Adonia

Adonia was a new and engaging object for his kind affections; and he received her promise to consider him as her father, and his house as her present home, with an exultation which resulted equally from attachment to this amiable and interesting *emigrée*, and from the satisfaction which he experienced in the hope of being useful to an unprotected orphan. Madame Brumelle had a small but elegant dressing-room allotted to her, to which she could retire when she preferred solitude to the gay crowds that commonly thronged about Fort-Mervan; and she was permitted to keep her own hours, and pursue her own avocations whenever she chose, without being liable to any interruption from the rest of the family.

Though Lord Arunville had determined to leave Fort-Mervan as soon as he found that Adonia was to become an inmate there, he was induced from day to day to defer his departure, on some pretext or

or other of the Admiral's, or of the young ladies to detain him; but she saw with pleasure that his conquest over his hopeless passion for herself was already begun. He no longer trembled at her approach, or coloured when he met her eye; but, without palpably shunning her, he avoided all opportunities of conversing with her, which might endanger his fixed resolution of forgetting the dreams that had so long enchained his reason; and, though his spirits were still deeply affected, and his health as yet gave but little promise of amendment, his mind was evidently calmer. He sometimes even wore an air of gaiety, which, as it seemed but a deceitful effort, rendered him more than ever amiable and interesting in the eyes of his fair nurse, (as she liked to style herself,) Miss Fitzwilliam, who watched his every look, and anticipated his every wish, with the most artless and unremitting anxiety. She, however, had gained little either of improved health or increased

creased vivacity by her constant attention to this new patient; and Adonia, though she forbore to observe it to her, had been shocked and surprised at their first meeting by a striking alteration in her appearance. As Miss Tracey was, however, sensible of no change, and this impression gradually wore away as Adonia became more accustomed to her cousin's look, she flattered herself that she had been deceived; and, as Johanna was naturally rather pale and thin, and more thoughtful than vivacious, any additional paleness or languor in her was hardly perceptible to those who were constantly with her. She was not indeed conscious of it herself, though her thoughts perpetually dwelt on one object, and she often found herself strangely disposed to weep, when she saw others around her gay and happy. She attributed this anxiety and dejection solely to her fears for Lord Arunville's health, and compassion for his hopeless melancholy; never once

suspecting

suspecting that this tender and increasing solicitude could either affect or prepare a poison for her future peace. Not many days after Adonia's arrival at the Fort, Lord Arunville received the visit he expected from his brother, Mr. Grybton, in whom she and Johanna immediately recognized the seducer of Annette; and the pain occasioned by her unworthy conduct was renewed by his appearance with added indignation against the gay unblushing libertine, who, conscious of being the detected betrayer of innocence, could yet maintain an easy confidence of deportment even in the presence of those whom his conduct had offended and insulted. He was, however, the acknowledged favorite of Fanny Tracey, and treated by the Admiral with every distinction that was due to his rank and the speciousness of his manners; and he was too well schooled in the chartered indecorums of fashion, to conceive that they would consider as an unpardonable offence such a

bagatelle

bagatelle as *une galanterie* with a little French *paysanne*. Supported, therefore, by their flattering attentions, he affected to regard the cold and distant manners of Adonia and Johanna towards him with perfect *nonchalance*, while Miss Tracey was the constant object of his devoirs, on whom he bestowed all the incense of admiring eyes and flattering words. Her gay volatile manners were indeed much better suited to his ideas of *ton* and *esprit* than those of the two fair cousins; and, though he could not but acknowledge their superior claims to beauty, he thought Fanny Tracey's arch smile, her air *vif et piquant*, and her gracious reception of his gallantries, an ample compensation for the coldness of these haughty beauties.

Lord Arunville observed his preference of Miss Tracey, and his marked indifference towards the other ladies, with atonishment; and one day asked him, how it

it happened, that, in this instance, he discovered so little of that connoisseurship in beauty for which he conceived himself celebrated? "Faith!" replied Grybton with an important air, "I am neither blind nor stupid; but you must know, my good Lord, this is only a piece of revenge! Who, do you think, with his eyes open, would not prefer the Hebe-face and bewitching form of *la belle de Rosier*, before the diminutive figure and every-day features of *la petite Fanchon?*

> "Such Helen was;—then who can blame the boy
> Who for her love consum'd his father's Troy!"

"Not very Helen-like neither!" continued he, "or she would not be such a piece of stubborn virtue as to frown disdain upon a man who has had enterprise enough to fly from Languedoc to Paris, and from Paris to Languedoc, and then back again a second time for the sake of adding a little sun-burnt Enna to his list of captive beauties?" "Did you then ever

ever know Mademoiselle de Rosier before?" cried Lord Arunville impatiently. "I cannot positively say," replied Grybton, "that I had the pleasure of the Lady's acquaintance, or of her good will; but I had the honor to be considerable enough in her eyes to occasion her some small alarm!" "What is it you mean to insinuate?" interrupted Lord Arunville angrily: "Does the man live who dares alarm Mademoiselle de Rosier?" "Yes, lives! my Lord," replied Grybton; "and might doubtless live in the sunshine of her smiles, could he exert himself to court them.—But do not put on your fighting face: I have positively no thoughts of supplanting you; and, since it is necessary to quiet your jealous alarms, I will recount to you the adventure alluded to; though, to own the truth, I feel a sort of compunction,—a—choak me! if I ever felt any thing of this kind before.—But the poor girl made her escape after all, as innocent as when I received her; and I

know

know she loved me too well not to repent her haste, had it not been for the bombastic pride infused into her by *la belle* De Rosier, and her counterpart-cousin!" He then related the circumstances which have already been told of his first meeting with Annette, Adonia's interference and his after-success in decoying away her beautiful *protégée*, who, it appeared too evidently, had been misled by her own artless tenderness as much as by his artifices. He told Lord Arunville that he had first taken her to Paris, where he had appointed to meet the Comte de l'Avignon: that, finding this nobleman still under arrest, and having no farther inducement to remain in Paris, especially with such a charge as Annette upon his hands, who exercised all his vigilance, he had then proceeded with her to England: that, convinced of her affection for him, he had wished to render that sacrifice voluntary which she had hitherto resolutely refused; and had therefore de-
 termined

termined to leave her for some time at liberty to consider his proposals. Hiring a small house for her in the neighbourhood of London, (of which he made her sole and absolute mistress,) he had quitted her for a few days, to visit his father's family; trusting for her security to the vigilance of a confidential servant, whom he deputed to watch her motions, but still more to the hold which he believed he possessed upon her heart.—He had never once dreamed that she would really attempt to brave solitary poverty, in a country of which he supposed she could not even know the language, when, to his astonishment, he found that in his absence she had made her escape, and all the endeavours of his servant to trace her flight had been ineffectual.

Lord Arunville heard this unblushing acknowledgement of his brother's meditated villany with indignation and disgust. Amid the indulgences of fashion and

and the gratifications of libertinism, the character of a seducer of innocence had ever been regarded by him with abhorrence; and, many as had been his sacrifices to licentiousness, he had now, in the hours of retrieved principle and rectified conduct, the consolation of at least reflecting, that he had never seduced others to vice who were not already vicious.—He expressed his detestation of Mr. Grybton's conduct with a degree of acrimony which rouzed the latters anger, and was retorted with equal warmth; and, in consequence of the quarrel which ensued, Mr. Grybton took an abrupt leave of the family, and left Fort-Mervan early next morning, in spite of all the smiling entreaties of *la petite Fanchon*, who would gladly have detained him in her chains. He was no sooner gone, than Adonia severely reproached herself for the false delicacy which had delayed her intended inquiries after Annette, who she could not believe already so lost to virtue as

not easily to be reclaimed by the voice of pity or of friendship; and whom she would have thought it her duty to admonish, could she have discovered her retreat. But Lord Arunville, who could now guess what would be her anxiety on this subject, took an early opportunity of mentioning it in a conversation with Johanna; and greatly relieved the regrets of the amiable cousins by informing them of her fortunate escape. While they lamented the poverty and distress to which she must now be exposed, they remembered with consolation that the knowledge of the English language which they had given her might be of considerable service; and the virtue, which had withstood the seductions of real tenderness, would, they judged, be sufficient to defend her from falling a prey to those licentious addresses of which her uncommon beauty rendered her so peculiarly the oject.

CHAP. XXXVII.

"He comes!—vain fears, I give ye to the winds!"

ADONIA now began to be anxious and alarmed by the silence of St. Loudon, to whom Admiral Tracey had immediately written the news of her arrival at Fort-Mervan. A fortnight had elapsed from that time, and yet he neither came nor wrote to welcome her. Though she could not doubt his regard, her delicacy demanded some expression of it, and she felt

felt much wounded by this instance of apparent neglect. It now occurred to her that her coming to England, so suddenly and unadvisedly, might appear to him to have been partly prompted by a desire of prying into his affairs, or to precipitate his determination in regard to the conditions which were held out on both sides relative to her becoming his; and, as he had once rejected the alternative she offered him, which would immediately have made him master of her hand and fortune, her pride was hurt by the idea that he could suppose she ever meant to repeat it unsolicited.

While she was distressing herself with these fanciful and groundless conjectures, which prepared her to meet him with a degree of embarrassment and restraint very different from the kind ingenuous welcome which the feelings of his own heart promised him, St. Loudon himself appeared before her. Having been in different

ferent parts of the kingdom in search of Earl Wallingford, he had never received Admiral Tracey's letter, informing him of the happiness that awaited him at Fort-Mervan; and his present visit being wholly accidental, he was doubly unprepared for a meeting with Adonia, whom he found wandering alone upon the beach, with her eyes and thoughts directed to the opposite coast of Hampshire; in some part of which she supposed St. Loudon might now be, as the Earl of Wallingford's most frequent summer-residence was in that county. The surprise which was mingled with his joy instantly informed her that he had not expected to find her there; and, in her eagerness to explain to him the causes which had hastened her coming to England, she hardly noticed, and very inadequately returned, his rapturous expressions of delight, and his repeated inquiries whether she was now well and happy? St. Loudon at length observed her strange em-

 barrassment,

barrassment, and, with an air which shewed him both disappointed and hurt, he said, "Does Mademoiselle de Rosier already repent the condescension so lately accorded, that she meets me with this cold, this mortifying, indifference? To see that you are here, Adonia, is sufficient happiness, without desiring to interrupt the transport of such a meeting by inquiring to what causes I owe it." "Ah! Ferdinand," said Adonia, blushing, and holding out her hand to him, "you know that I rejoice to see you!—you know that transport is a poor word to express the joy of meeting a friend so tenderly, so deservedly, esteemed!—But is it not necessary to explain the reasons of my sudden determination of coming to England, after having resisted such pressing solicitations?—It must seem so strange to you!" "Not strange, that Mademoiselle de Rosier should consent to contribute to the happiness of her friends!" interrupted Ferdinand, fervently kissing the

the hand she had given him. "Do I not know that your motives are always just and right?" "What *you* may think justice," said Adonia, smiling, and recovering her customary candour, "may appear *extravagance* to me; and I only wanted to inform you by a circuitous passage, what you will oblige me to take the shortest way of telling you,—*that I did not come to England in pursuit of you!*"—"But you will allow me to believe that you do not wish me to leave England because you are in it?" inquired Ferdinand gaily. "You may believe what you please, except the article I have prohibited," replied she. "Then I will believe every thing of hope, of happiness!" cried Ferdinand rapturously; "I will believe the period not far distant, when I shall be blest with the completion of all my wishes!"—"A very comprehensive plan of faith!" cried Adonia; "but, since you will not allow *me* to be the first narrator, may I beg to be informed of *your*

adventures since we parted, and on what basis this new creed of yours is founded? Can you give a reason for the hope that is in you?" "None," said Ferdinand, "at present, but what arises from my reliance on your goodness, and the persuasion that the fortunate being whom you honor with your friendship cannot be marked out for disappointment! I have not yet seen Lord Wallingford." "Nor heard from him?" interrupted she. "I have heard from him," replied Ferdinand; but I scarcely know how to construe his letter. Cold, haughty, mysterious, he commands me to come to him instantly, and then removes from the place at which I am directed to find him, without leaving any information whither he is gone." "Did you then apply to him by letter? I should have thought that a dangerous expedient." "I did not write to him myself, nor can I guess who could have informed him of my being in England," St. Loudon replied: "You may recollect that

that we all agreed in thinking it best that I should deliver my credentials in person, without any previous introduction."

They had now gained the house, and Adonia gaily interrupted him by observing that there was nothing so tedious as a twice-told tale; and, as Admiral Tracey, and the rest of his friends within, would have no small curiosity to hear his, he had better defer the remainder of it till they were all assembled together. "It is enough for me at present," added she, "to find that you are such a true zealot to your faith." Ferdinand thanked her with a look of expressive acknowledgement, and they entered a small parlour, distinguished by the name of the work-room, (but which at present could boast of few tokens of industry,) where they found the family-party alone; Miss Tracey making love to her squirrel, Johanna engaged in conversation with Lord Arunville, and Admiral Tracey perusing,

with his gravest face, a new taxation-bill. "Ha! my young Lord Stavordale!" cried the latter, throwing down the pamphlet, and seizing his hand with the most cordial welcome, "from what point does the wind blow, that gives us the pleasure of seeing you here? However, your *looks* tell me that you are sailing before the wind!" "I, at least, have the weather-gage at present!" replied Ferdinand, smiling. After saluting the ladies, he stopped and looked with surprise and concern on the pale and dejected countenance of Johanna, which struck him still more forcibly than it had once alarmed Adonia. "You have been ill, my amiable friend?" cried he, in a tone of kind anxiety. "Ill!" repeated Johanna, faintly smiling, while her pale cheeks flushed almost a crimson; "I have indeed had a cold lately, but surely it has not altered me so very much!" "You are really extremely ungallant, Monsieur St. Loudon, to read indisposition in a fair lady's

looks," said Adonia: "now, for my part, I think Johanna looks much better than she did." Johanna's blushes deepened, and the subject was dropped.

Lord Arunville and St. Loudon eyed each other at first with something that resembled hostility; but on the part of the former it was scarcely more than momentary; and as soon as he could disengage him from the group, taking his hand cordially, he expressed his pleasure at seeing him again in a manner so graceful and unaffected, as at once expelled from St. Loudon's bosom every uneasy sensation. Adonia remarked this generous conduct with delight, as the most perfect assurance she could have of Lord Arunville's conquered passion. They now all expressed their eagerness to learn what had been Ferdinand's success with Lord Wallingford, of which they were disposed to augur well from the length of his absence; which time they supposed had

had been spent with his grandfather.—"Alas, no!" said he; "like all other speculators who are more eager than prudent, I have spent much time and trouble to very little purpose." He then informed them, that, not finding Lord Wallingford in London, (whither they were first directed,) Mr. Stanhope and he had next traced him to Bath; that, on their arrival there, they learned that they had passed him upon the road, on his way back to London. But their previous eagerness had now frustrated the possibility of following him thither immediately; for Mr. Stanhope, exhausted by the fatigue of travelling with a rapidity which had allowed him neither rest nor refreshment, was here taken dangerously ill; and at Bath they were detained ten days before he was able to re-commence the pursuit.

They were next directed to find the Earl at his seat of Conway-castle in Hampshire,

shire, and they proceeded directly thither. The porter answered to their interrogation, whether his Lord was at home? that he was in London.—To London, quite impatient and disappointed, they went; and, returning to their former lodgings at a hôtel in Charles-street, Haymarket, they found that two letters, which had come there for St. Loudon, had been sent after him to Bath, according to his orders, by the people of the house, and thus lost, as he had neglected to leave similar instructions at the latter place. Supposing that one or both of these letters might be from Adonia, St. Loudon immediately wrote to their landlord at Bath, directing him where to send them, and requesting that they might be forwarded with all possible dispatch. He, however, did not receive them, and his applications to Lord Wallingford were attended with as little success. Thrice they called at his house in Piccadilly, and were always denied admission. Mr. Stanhope did not

think

think it prudent to leave *his* name; and, from the description they had received of Lord Wallingford as a superannuated man, surrounded by flatterers and needy dependents, who ruled him entirely, they still wished to avoid applying to him by letter.—Mr. Stanhope renewed several of his old acquaintances in London, and introduced St. Loudon to a circle who served to amuse the present time, and among whom they found enough to reconcile them in some measure to the delay of their meeting with Lord Wallingford. St. Loudon, still anxious for his letters, now wrote to the post-master at Bath on the subject; and while he waited for an answer, they had the mortification of hearing that Lord Wallingford had again left town, and was gone to Conway-castle, where he was to remain some time. Certain of now finding him there, and having better hopes of being admitted to his presence in the country than in London, they would have followed him thither immediately;

mediately; but St. Loudon, who had not yet heard from Bath, unwilling to relinquish the hope of receiving tidings of Adonia, determined to postpone his departure a few days longer; and in the interim was surprised by a letter from Lord Wallingford himself; who, in a cold, haughty, and suspicious, tone informed him, that he had been apprised of his pretensions and his present pursuit; and, though he gave little credit to the validity of the former, desired that he would come to him immediately at Conway-castle, where he himself would enter upon a proper investigation of the business, and either make the acknowledgement he claimed, or detect and punish him as an impostor, according to the result.—The name of impostor rouzed all St. Loudon's indignant spirit; and, superseding every other consideration in his eagerness to wipe it away, he set out immediately, accompanied by his uncle, to Conway-castle.—But here they

were

were again disappointed, by receiving intelligence that Lord Wallingford, on a visit to the Isle of Wight, had fallen from his horse, and received a fracture, which detained him there, at the house of the gentleman whom he was visiting, Sir Hedworth Staffordson; and the family at Conway-castle knew not when to expect his return.

This determined Ferdinand to visit his friends at Fort-Mervan, as he might thus both gratify himself by their society, and be in the way of perhaps meeting with his grandfather. At Lyndhurst, Mr. Stanhope was detained by an accidental meeting with an old friend, who engaged him to spend a day or two with him; and Ferdinand, leaving him there, attended by his faithful Hubert St. Croix, proceeded immediately to the Fort, where Mr. Stanhope was afterwards to join him. "You have really reached us by a strange circuitous route," cried Fanny; "and I find,

find, after all, we are only indebted to accident for a visit which, I flattered myself, was made at the instances of pure friendship and affection." "I could lay five to four," cried Admiral Tracey, "that the Abbé Poverlerie has appeared above ground, and that the old Illustrissimo is only afraid of proving an impostor himself, when he hears what wonders have been brought to light. Through what other channel could he have heard of your pretensions, but by Poverlerie's information?"—"I am indeed at some loss to conjecture," cried Ferdinand; "but it is at any rate almost impossible that the *Abbé* could have directed him *where I was to be found.*" "I fear," said Lord Arunville, slightly colouring, "that I must stand confessed an officious Marplot! It was I who furnished Lord Wallingford with Monsieur St. Loudon's address. Being intimately acquainted with his Lordship, will you pardon me, me, St. Loudon, when I own, that, conceiving

ceiving my testimony might have some weight in softening his reception of you, I took the liberty of writing to him; not invidiously to expose your designs, but to inform him from my own personal knowledge that St. Loudon would honor any family into which he might be received." "Generous, noble-minded, Lord Arunville!" cried St. Loudon, flying to embrace him.—Adonia also eagerly caught his hand, while tears of admiration and gratitude started in her eyes. At this moment of pleasing enthusiasm, they were interrupted by the arrival of company.—Johanna stole silently away; and Fanny Tracey popped her squirrel into its cage, and drew *herself up* with all possible dignity, to receive, she said, one of the most sentimentally-dignified ladies in Christendom.—This was Miss Staffordson, or rather *Almeria* Staffordson, (as she chose to be called,) the eldest sister of the gentleman at whose house Lord Walingford now was; who, with her sister, Miss

Miss Frances Staffordson, had taken a morning-ride to Fort Mervan, to apologize to the family for their having been obliged, from the consequences of Lord Wallingford's accident, to postpone a ball which they were to have given on the following evening. "We hoped," said Almeria, (in the softest voice imaginable, and an air of the deepest interest,) "we were induced to flatter ourselves, that his Lordship's confinement would have proved less obstinate, or we should earlier have sent round cards of excuse.—Till to-day he seemed to have experienced no other unpleasant consequences from his accident, than what took place upon the spot,—a simple fracture, which Dr. Elmsly conceived hopes would be of little difficulty; but to-day all our expectations of his immediate convalescence are overthrown; he has a considerable degree of fever and nervous irritation upon him, and really a severe head-ache, which of all things indisposes one most for the reception of amuse-

amusement!" "Indeed!" interrupted Miss Frances, (who was a tall Amazonian maiden of thirty or upwards, and whose figure perfectly accorded with her tones of voice, her whip, and riding-dress:) —"I am amazed, Almeria, to hear you make such a fuss about that old figure, with his broken bones and fanciful complaints! nor can I conceive what his being in the house can do either for or against the ball, unless he had been to favor us with an interlude of Lame Vulcan!— But, *n'emporte*, Fanny, my girl!" cried she, shaking her whip at Miss Tracey; "we shall be all set on foot again in a few days; for Don Pomposo will surely have good manners enough to take himself home when he hears of our *discomfitura*; and he shall not want a hint, if *I* can help it.—But you have not introduced us to your party," continued she in an audible whisper:—"Who are the two dashing-looking men you have got with you?" "The gentleman on the sofa opposite

posite to us is Lord Arunville," whispered Fanny; "the other is,—is,—a French gentleman, an acquaintance of my father's." "A devilish handsome boy, upon my faith!" cried the nymph of the whip: "Come, introduce them!" Fanny then named the parties to each other, and Miss Frances immediately began an harangue to Ferdinand, in bad French, on the comparative merits of the two nations; in which she intended at once to impress him with an idea of her agreeable vivacity, (which could not but be acceptable to a Frenchman,) and her extensive and local acquaintance with both countries; though it is true she had never travelled farther than to Calais or Dunkirk in the one, and knew nothing of the other but what she had picked up in the school of *ton*. The tender-hearted Almeria had singled out Lord Arunville as the object of her attention. She was acquainted with his sisters; and, over and above having many inquiries to make relative to them,

them, she saw with a single glance that Lord Arunville's heart was not of the impenetrable order: (she had once been a beauty, and was still a fine woman.) She was that he was an invalid ; in short, she saw every thing in his physiognomy that could interest the sympathy of a sentimentalist.—"How long are your visitors to be with you?" said Miss Frances apart to Miss Tracey, as she and her sister were preparing to take their leave.—"I mean the men ; for we have women enough already in all conscience! However, I hope we shall see them all at our ball. As soon as the day is fixed, they shall all get cards ; that's poz ! if they are still on the Island." "The ladies will be here some time," replied Miss Tracey: "for the gentlemen, I cannot promise: but we have lost our best beau.—Lord Arunville is a mere cipher compared with his brother, Mr. Grybton, who left us a day or two ago."—"Oh ! I know Grybton !" replied Miss Frances ; "he is a fine lad,

upon

upon my soul!—pity he has not more sense though! Not an atom of information beyond the annals of the park, or the play-house! and as for Lord Arunville, he seems a perfect Goth!" "He has quite sense enough for a handsome man," cried Miss Tracey; "and as to learning, Lord! I hate learned men of all things! But what do you think of our Frenchman?" "An intolerable puppy!" cried Miss Frances. "All the time one is speaking to him, he thinks of nothing but how to roll his fine dark eyes to the best advantage. But I suppose he is in love: I thought he eyed that Mademoiselle Adonia, (what did you call her?) with particular complacency. But he is a devilish handsome fellow for all that,—a man of fashion, I presume?" "Yes, he is a man of family," replied Fanny. "Well, we shall see you all at the ball I hope?" and, nodding familiarly, she hurried away to the rest of the company, who were attending her sister, as she had

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the felicity of being handed into her saddle by Lord Arunville. Miss Frances disdained all assistance: putting her foot into the stirrup, and giving a light spring, she vaulted into her seat with the neatness and dexterity of the most experienced jockey; then, putting her hand to her riding cap, with a salute *en militaire* to the party in general, and a friendly nod to St. Loudon in particular, she galloped away, and was presently out of sight, leaving the gentle Almeria far behind, to make the best of her way as she could.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Je n'arme contre lui que le fruit de son crime.

CREBILLON.

LORD Wallingford's indisposition, which detained him from home, and his absence among that herd of interested relations who, as he was supposed to have no lineal heir, were perpetually watching over his motions, and striving to keep aloof all other pretenders to his fortune, were circumstances highly favorable to St. Loudon's object; and, when Mr. Stan-

hope, a day or two after the visit of the Miss Staffordsons, arrived at the Fort, it was agreed that Admiral Tracey and he should immediately accompany their young friend, and endeavour to effect the much wished-for meeting between Ferdinand and his grandfather.

Adonia's agitation, when she saw them depart, could not be concealed.—She had thought that her mind was nerved with sufficient firmness to support calmly the worst that could ensue; but, when this important crisis arrived, the event of which might perhaps separate her for ever from the man who possessed the warmest preference in her heart, and who seemed to her to stand *alone* in creation, as the most amiable and engaging of human beings, she felt that she was still a woman, with all her keenest sensibilities alive.—She retired to her chamber; she knelt, and with a pure and fervent spirit implored the Supreme Being to look down with

with compassion on the throes of weak and faithless nature:—to strengthen her fortitude, and prepare her mind to meet with dignity the fate that awaited her:—to bless her Ferdinand;—to preserve him in virtue and happiness, in whatever state it should please heaven to continue his future days!—"And, O thou Omniscient!" said she, "if thou seest best to separate us; if he is destined to cheer and to reward some woman more worthy of his excellences, may no remembrance of Adonia ever weaken the influence of duty! may he resign me with fortitude, and be duly impressed with the importance of these truths,—that no disappointment of our own favorite views can excuse the fulfilment of the part allotted to us by heaven; that no private suffering can exempt us from the claims of society; that a beneficent Father provides for every state of life a sufficient proportion of the means of happiness, and of dispensing good, to render that state desirable and

 useful,

useful, would blind and erring man be content to reap the good possessed, without longing after that which is denied him.—Teach *me* also, O thou compassionate God! to feel the truths I utter! May they revive within me in the hour of trial; repress the weak vain tears of useless regret; and remind me, that in thy presence they were spoken with the assent of conscience; and that to disown them by impious murmuring is to condemn myself by the words of my own mouth, by the testimony of my own conscience!"—Tranquillized by the calm serenity of devotion, and revived by the idea that the kind Father of the Universe would listen to her address and grant her petitions, her mind regained itself, and with assured composure she returned to the family, entering on her usual morning-employments with the same air of active cheerfulness as though no mental tumult had arisen to discompose even the serenity of her countenance.

Lord

Lord Arunville, who knew the fervor of her attachment, and the trembling sensibility of her heart, wondered at her composure, and beheld this new instance of her intellectual vigour with increasing veneration, with renewed passion. Johanna watched her countenance and Lord Arunville's by turns, till a tear stole from her eye, and a half-suppressed sigh heaved from her bosom. Fanny Tracey, a being of another class, could not comprehend the efforts of a superior mind; and, when she heard Adonia talk on the most indifferent subjects with her wonted ease, when she saw her seat herself at the piano-forte, and make Johanna accompany her with her voice to amuse Lord Arunville, without seeming to need amusement for herself, Fanny pronounced that it was impossible she could really love St. Loudon!

In the mean while, Ferdinand was experiencing all the united tortures of

 hope,

hope, of fear, of pleasure, and of the most acute suffering! Introduced for the first time into the presence of a *father*,—for the first time sensible to the feelings of filial tenderness,—the cold, the haughty, tyrant, that he had been used to picture Lord Wallingford, was changed into the most venerable form of the parental character; and Ferdinand's heart was surcharged with the deepest interest and concern for his illness. When Admiral Tracey had announced their desire of seeing Lord Wallingford, Mr. Stanhope and Ferdinand were immediately conducted to his chamber by his own desire. He was reclined on a sofa, but slightly raised himself at their entrance; and through the lines of his pale and stern, but dejected, countenance, strong curiosity and interest were blended with disdain. "My heart recognizes in you a father!" said Ferdinand, approaching him respectfully; "will you, can you, dispose yourself to receive me as a son? I am no intruder upon affections

tions to which I have no claim: I come not needlessly to wound your feelings by a retrospect of the past; I implore only your justice, my Lord!—Your love must come unsolicited; and I venture not to importune it!"

His fine expressive countenance; his graceful figure; the tones of his voice, deep and penetrating; all united to recall an image too-deeply impressed on Lord Wallingford's heart not to awaken it to tenderness,—not to warm it towards the child of his lost son, whose happiness had been blasted by his cruelty! The plaintive tone of mind too, bestowed by sickness, contributed to assist the meltings of nature, which yearned to acknowledge and embrace this copy of his much-injured father, whose resemblance of what *he was* in the days of youth and hope was of itself an evidence strong enough to identify his claims to that tenderness which he had rouzed. But nature was soon silenced

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by pride and brooding suspicion; and, recovering from the sudden surprize and emotion which his first appearance had awakened, Lord Wallingford coldly desired him to produce the testimonials on which he founded his pretensions.—Ferdinand then related the circumstances which had put it out of his power to exhibit his most authoritative credentials,—those which proved his father's marriage with Miss Stanhope.—"But," added he, rather proudly, "if Lord Wallingford has any remembrance of his son's hand-writing, any reliance on his assertions, or any desire of doing justice to his memory, the papers in my possession will be found sufficient for internal conviction."—He then produced the packet which had been bequeathed by his father, and deposited with Mrs. Fitzwilliam, containing "Lord Stavordale's Narrative," some other papers relative to his first unfortunate marriage, and a few sheets of affecting and impressive advice

to

to his son; together with the miniature which has already been mentioned. Lord Wallingford examined the picture and its inscription with strong internal emotion. "This must indeed have belonged to my son!" cried he, and for a few moments nature and anguish again asserted their rights. A long pause ensued.—"But how," at length said Lord Wallingford sarcastically, while the fears of detected guilt trembled in every vein, "how does the picture of an infant prove this fine full-grown young man to be the same for whom it was designed?" "Lord Wallingford!" said Mr. Stanhope, sternly and impressively, "forbear to talk sportively of what has been written in blood! There are many respectable witnesses ready to prove this young man's identity as the original of that picture, whenever you may choose to demand their tesimony. His mother was *my sister*; and I myself was present at her marriage with Lord Stavordale,—that wretched

union which your treachery converted from a cup of bliss to poison and death!—Yes, wide-spreading desolation!" continued he, pausing, and passing from a momentary flush of grief to all the glowing indignation of injured and romantic feeling. "Had my poor Agnes been the only victim, I could have borne this all-timid levity with temper! *She* was but a young, timid, and unformed, girl.—Had she lived, her fame was blasted by you; and peace could never more have tenanted her bosom!—But the ruin stopped not here.—*Where*, indeed, end the ravages of pride and ambition? Let loose the torrent, and no human barrier can stem its desolation!—Your son became a murderer! he died by the slow venom of remorse!—The guilt be on your head who drove him to commit the deed!—Hear, also, what bitter injuries were *mine!*—Banished from my native country by you, severed from every endearing tie of my youth, my heart languished for an object

on

on which to bestow its disappointed affections; and in America, whither I went and pursued the studies which I had lately begun, to fit me for the medical profession, I married an amiable French woman; who brought me a fortune sufficient, with the fruits of my after-employment as a physician, to maintain us both in competency; and virtues and kind affections, which I fondly hoped would have solaced my latest hours.—She blessed me with an excellent son, and a lapse of years rolled over us in contentment; although the mysterious loss of my beloved sister still embittered many of my secret moments. At length, when the period of my banishment was elapsed, I determined to return to England, and endeavour, if possible, to penetrate the obscurity which divided me from this ever-lamented object. I adopted the name of my wife's family, (which I have till lately retained,) to screen me from my proud persecutor; and visited in disguise the place of my nativity.—I was told

told that Agnes had been long dead.—Lord Stavordale was not in the country; but I heard that he had deserted my sister before her death, and married Lady Frances S.; that calumny had been cruel to my sister's fame, and that she had died in poverty and disgrace! Resentment fired my soul; I declaimed loudly against the vile calumny.—I execrated Lord Stavordale, and vowed to be revenged.—My imprudent clamours once more betrayed me into the power of Lord Wallingford.—I was seized, imprisoned, and detained in confinement, till hope died within me! I was then released, but on condition of leaving the kingdom immediately; and I re-sailed to America, to the peaceful home where I had left my beloved wife and darling boy.—I returned just in time to see her die! Her heart was broken by my mysterious absence! My son was yet left to me; and I consoled myself with thinking that he would live to comfort my declining years. I knew that my amiable

wife

wife was in happiness, and strove to stifle my vain regrets, that I might do my duty to my son. He too,—he had caught the infection of hopeless anguish from his mother. It lurked a while unperceived in his constitution, and then betrayed itself. I discovered, with the horror of a ship-wrecked man who feels the last plank failing which divides him from the fathomless ocean, that my Eugene, my only surviving comfort, was wasting away in a deep decline. Not all the power of medicine, not all the prayers of paternal affection, could ward off his death-stroke!" (His voice became convulsed by sobs.) "Such," at length he continued, "was the fatal train lighted by Lord Wallingford's ambition! Be just while you yet may!—The hour of retribution is at hand!"

Lord Wallingford heard him no longer. The bitterness of remorse had shaken the feeble cords of life, and he fainted away.

Ferdinand

Ferdinand supported him in his arms; and his heart upbraided Mr. Stanhope's severity, while he felt within him throes of sympathising nature, and pressed his grandfather to his bosom. He recovered; he gazed on Mr. Stanhope with a look of horror; and felt the embraces of Lord Stavordale's son with renewed remorse. At length he feebly faltered out,—" Resume the dreadful narrative! Tell me, tell me, all! Tell me that this endearing young man is my grandson!—My heart owns him as such; but confirm its suggestions, and say by what means he has been saved to me?" " Compose yourself, my Lord!" cried Ferdinand, tenderly and fervently kissing his hand: " The story is long and painful; you are not fitted to hear it now."—" Oh yes!" cried Lord Wallingford:—" Read me Lord Stavordale's Narrative! Let the hour of remorse be fulfilled! Let me know at once all that my wounded spirit has to suffer for! I have, ndeed, erred,—greatly erred; but, heaven is

is my witness, I loved my son with the most doating fondness; though it was perhaps this very affection which, from a false bias, proved destructive to him."

Tears of the keenest anguish rolled in large drops down his faded cheeks, which wore the blue and chilly hues of death; and Ferdinand, strongly affected by his emotions, would gladly have delayed the heart-rending communications which he desired, lest the feeble remnant of strength should, be utterly overpowered. But remorse was fully awakened, and pride subdued by tenderness. The eager desire of yet performing one act of justice to Lord Stavordale's memory rendered him impatient to be convinced of Ferdinand being indeed his son; and he intreated him to commence the narrative with such distressing urgency, that Ferdinand's delicacy was over-ruled, and he found himself necessitated to comply. "You must read it aloud to me!" said Lord Wallingford:

ford: "My eyes are weak and dim!"—The narrative was as follows.—It was written at different intervals, marked by the changes of the unhappy writer's mind.

LORD STAVORDALE's NARRATIVE.

"The whirlwind at length begins to calm!"

I HAVE preserved my fame from the imputation of murder: I have preserved my helpless child, and placed him in a safe asylum; and now, like the savage Indian who returns to the field of slaughter to gather up the limbs he has mangled, let me turn and review the havoc of misplaced ambition, and the ravages of ungoverned

ungoverned revenge! Can the wretched outcast from happiness and hope retrace the days of innocent serenity without a trembling heart? Can the assassin of angelic purity and generous love record his murders with a steady hand? I gaze upon the past with a vacant and unmoistened eye: I look towards the future without a hope, without a wish, without a fear! It can bring no comfort for despair,—no horror which I have not already tasted! I write for my son,—to warn him that the world is peopled by tyrants and traitors! To teach him, by his father's fate, to put no faith in the fairest forms of sanctity; to turn from the hand of offered friendship, as from the serpent's venom;—to dash from his lips the cup of love, though twined with wreaths of amaranth, and all the glowing flowers of Paradise!

When Ferdinand reads these imperfect effusions of a heart wrung by tortures such

as

as never were conceived but in the moment when felt, the poor, raving, forlorn, author of his being, blasted and withered in the summer of life and enjoyment, shall sleep in oblivion, and breathe this tainted air no more! I shall then be laid the pale forgotten tenant of a grave, the only peaceful haven of humanity,—the victim of all the united passions that desolate the earth, wrought up to complicated phrenzy by man's worst enemy,—man! Let him mark this; and suspect every face that smiles upon him, every hope which holds out its promise!—Away with this impotent pen! It cannot paint man black enough!

Conway-Castle, Sept. 12, 17—.

Two years have passed over my Agnes's tomb! Two years have I lingered under the preying misery of saying to myself, "I am an assassin!" Within a shorter space I have added to that, "I am a slow deliberate destroyer! entering the

the bosom that loved and trusted me, to transfuse into it the corrosive venom of disappointed happiness." And yet I live! Familiarized to images of woe; wearied out by vain self-accusation, and remorse which cannot heal; the phrenzy of despair is quieted, and my senses return to a tone of more temperate anguish. I can look into my heart without shuddering at crimes which were unpremeditated: I can review my days of peace, though fled for ever! without sickening or shrinking with agonizing disgust from the contrast offered by the present. I now therefore resume my pen. My son cannot surely be destined to a lot so wretched as mine; but, in any situation there is no moral lesson so impressive as that which is drawn from the knowledge of a parent's errors or misfortunes. I will lay before him all of mine. May he shudder at the picture, and guard himself against these two grand springs of human misery,—passion and ambition!

"The

"The ambition of my father was the origin of all my misfortunes. I was his only child, and he doated on me with extravagant fondness; but his affection was the offspring of pride, and by pride were all his schemes for my prosperity directed. He regarded me as the heir of an illustrious house, who was to build up his name and perpetuate his honors; and he early taught me to consider high birth as a distinction which intitled me to the homage and services of all inferior ranks; and that, where this homage or these services were refused to me, they were to be exacted by haughtiness and persecution. Humoured in every fretful passion of childhood, waited on by a numerous train of domestics, over whom I was permitted to exercise my little tyranny unchidden; and encouraged in the wildest extravagances of a daring and intrepid spirit, as proofs of the dawning of an energetic mind; I became the terror and hatred of all around me, who were compelled

pelled to yield to my caprices: nay, even my father's visitors were not always exempted from sharing the effects of my unlimited haughtiness and passion.—My father alone retained a proportion of my deference; but he preserved it by the exercise of correspondent passions, which, too often opposed to mine, at length lost their ascendency. His stern and haughty spirit, which demanded instant obedience and profound respect, served at length but to irritate my impetuosity, or divert my risibility, when the veil of mysterious fear which had first bowed me to it was thrown aside by the discovery of his weaknesses; and one day, exasperated by his lofty opposition of a wild scheme which I had engaged in with some boys of inferior rank, (my intimacy with whom he particularly disapproved,) I forgot every remaining obligation of duty or decorum, and struck him! The storm of rage and indignation which ensued can only be imagined by those who in similar circumstances have for the first time

time in their lives being plunged in contrition by some stupendous alarm, which almost annihilates reason in the moment when it awakens it. Trembling and abashed, I shrunk from myself; while my father, who had nurtured and encouraged all my daring passions, frantic to find that they could be retorted on himself, commanded me instantly to quit his presence, and never see him more! But the affection of nature and habit could not be utterly exterminated, even in a moment of the most phrenzied rage; and, though he had sworn to turn me out a wanderer and a beggar, he could not resolve to punish me but by a temporary banishment from home and luxury,—an appearance of continued resentment which his pride demanded, and which reflection informed him was to me a necessary correction. With all my intemperance of habituated passion, I was by nature generous and just; and, keenly sensible of my error, this first movement of contrition opened my eyes to all my other excesses. I submitted

mitted to the banishment he condemned me to, softened and humbled; and determined seriously to begin a reform, which I was shocked to discover had been so long necessary. I was sent to a distant county, to the care of a clergyman, whom my father had known at college; a man of learning and probity, of the most unaffected manners, the most undissembling goodness of heart. His circumstances were confined; and he lived in a style of the utmost frugality, which my father would not permit him to improve on my account, although the salary he received with me almost doubled his former income.—Determined to humble my pride, he forbade every distinction which might have been paid to my rank, took away my usual allowance of money, and ordered that I should be treated with the rigor due to one who rendered himself unworthy of a parent's care.—But in the stern jailor whom I had pictured, Mr. Stanhope, I found a being made up only

only of kind affections, who admonished without chiding, and reproved without offending my pride. Far from the severity which I had been led to expect as the just punishment of my follies, I was courted back to reason with gentleness and entreaty. He had a son exactly of my own age, and a daughter about two years younger. We were all made sharers in the same instructions: the reproofs which were pointed at me were equally addressed to all; and, while my heart appropriated them, and owned their justice, my haughty spirit was appeased by the delicacy with which they were administered. That respect which my father could not extort from me was Mr. Stanhope's involuntarily.—He instilled into me the noblest and justest sentiments in a simple and affecting style, suited to my years and the susceptibility of my heart.—I heard them with admiration, I adopted them with fervor, and determined within myself never more to permit my conduct

to

to dishonor the native feelings of my heart. My worthy tutor praised my ardor, and rejoiced to discover in me dispositions which, he said, rendered me capable of reaching every valuable attainment. Such praise was the best stimulant to a lofty mind like mine. I strove to justify it to the utmost; and made so rapid a progress in my different classical studies, as well as in the government of my passions, that, when my father at length deigned to visit me, an entire reconciliation took place, accompanied by the most lavish encomiums on my improvements, and on Mr. Stanhope's care. Highly sensible of the value of Mr. Stanhope's instructions, the Earl strove to prevail on him to attend me home in quality of private tutor and chaplain to the family. But, as this could not be brought to suit with his own domestic arrangements, it was at length determined that I should remain with him at the vicarage, and pursue the same system of education which

which had been so happily begun,—with the difference only of my being permitted to resume my former indulgences of money and attendants. Mr. Stanhope's income was also farther augmented; and thus, enabled by my father's munificence to extend his comforts, and lay by some provision for his children, his gratitude knew no bounds; and his affection for me, and zeal for my improvement, were stimulated, in the simplicity of a warm and honest heart, by reverence for my father. I remained at the vicarage till I had completed my sixteenth year; and then, after a few months spent at home, I was sent with my friend Edward Stanhope to the university. At the age of eighteen, during one of the college-vacations, I accompanied him home on a visit to his father and sister, neither of whom I had seen since my departure from the vicarage.— That sister, that most engaging form of female beauty and gentleness, received us alike with endearing and artless affection.

I had

I had left her a wild romping girl, of heedless manners and unrestrained vivacity, too volatile to create interest in a heart so young as mine, and not handsome enough to excite admiration in one who had not yet learned to remark on beauty. She was now a new being; unchanged only in the artless warmth of her heart, and that simplicity of feeling which annexed no impropriety to the receiving, with the same proofs of sisterly love as in the period of our childhood, one who now knew and felt that there was a love still more fervent; and I beheld with astonishment that she was beautiful and interesting to a degree which I had never before even imagined. Yet, though her features were of the most faultless symmetry, and her form light and graceful as the aerial shapes created in a poet's fancy, it was a beauty less striking than affecting; and her manners corresponded with her face and figure. Pale, timid, retiring, she neither sought to astonish by her beauty, nor to dazzle

dazzle by her wit. The former she seemed wholly unconscious of; the latter never ventured to appear when noticed or solicited: but, occasionally, when the friendly circle were gathered round the evening fire,—when reserve imperceptibly stole away, and bashfulness lost its alarms, amid the interchanged communications of kindred minds,—the energies of Agnes Stanhope would spring up unbidden, charm in the playfulness of fancy, or move in the impressive force of truth.—The contrast, between her general manners and these enchanting flashes of unexpected and superior mind, rendered both doubly engaging; and the freedom with which she still treated me, as in the days of our childish intimacy, gave me opportunities of seeing her in every form. I loved her with the most boundless passion,—a passion which death only can extinguish, though the object is gone for ever! and though *another* now lays equal claim to my love and my regret!

Yes,

Yes, Agnes! thou shalt not be an hour unwept, whilst thy wretched husband has an hour to number! Thy pensive beauty, thy timid gentleness, thy every attitude of female loveliness, will haunt my fancy with unceasing visions, till the memory which tortures, and the reason which vainly strives to comfort, me are alike extinguished in the grave!

I have made a long digression from the course of my narrative, in the vain attempt of describing this dear lost victim.—Alas! who could *feel* her charms like me, were the portrait I might draw even lovely and interesting as the original? But all my efforts to trace her perfections end in lamentations for her loss; and to comprehend these, it were necessary to have loved and been beloved like me!—The hours which I now passed beneath Mr. Stanhope's quiet roof seemed to teach me a superior mode of existence, unthought of before. They were at first shaded by the anxiety of doubt, while I continued

continued ignorant of the state of my Agnes's affections: but her artless heart was soon fully unveiled to me, and in the assurance of reciprocal love,—in the rapturous thought of being all the world to Agnes, as she was all the world to me,—I forgot that there were others who claimed at least my deference; or, if I thought of my father, it was only to feel that his pride and his prejudices formed barriers to my wishes which were too powerful to be easily surmounted; and I therefore laboured to banish altogether from my mind images which were inauspicious to those floating visions of felicity which, however unattainable, I was resolved to pursue.—I prolonged my stay at the vicarage till my father had sent twice to demand my return home; and even then ventured to form a pretext for extending my absence. Yet, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, Mr. Stanhope never once discerned the magnetism which detained me.—The consciousness that he would disapprove of an attachment which had

had little probability of ever being sanctioned by my father, taught me to dissemble with him; and Agnes's natural timidity, and the bashful reserve of conscious love, guarded her secret from his observation with equal effect; but Edward, young, sanguine, and romantic, as myself, was the confident of my wishes, the encourager of my hopes. He thought his sister, lovely and virtuous, the equal of the proudest Peer of the British realm, —*and he was right!* We had not long been returned to Cambridge, when Edward was hastily recalled by the tidings of his father's last illness. The excellent man did not linger long; and his death penetrated my heart with the deepest filial regret, rendered more affecting by the thought that Agnes was now bereft of a protector.—I knew that she must quit the vicarage, and that she had no near relation who could supply to her the home she would lose; I shuddered therefore to think of the difficulties and dangers to which a being so young and artless might be ex-

posed; thus thrown upon a world of unfeeling profligacy, without the necessary protection which her beauty and gentleness so peculiarly required.

As soon as I could contrive a tolerable pretence to my tutor, I stole away from Cambridge, and joined my mourning friends.—Our loss was common: my filial tears were mingled with theirs, and I shared in all their consultations for the future, by which I learned that Agnes felt alarms similar to my own; and shrunk trembling and reluctant from every prospect that presented itself to her. I availed myself of her fears as a plea to urge my suit.—Blinded by love, forgetful of my father, of every obstacle to this inauspicious union, I conjured her to invest me with the right of guardianship by becoming mine.—Edward opposed to this the propriety of first asking my father's concurrence, before I took any farther steps towards such an important disposal

of

of myself; nor could he wish his sister, he said, to enter into any family where she would not be received with welcome, and acknowledged with respect. But I knew the Earl's temper too well to venture my happiness on so great an improbability as his consent; and I opposed my friend's reasons with such earnest entreaty, that he was at length induced to yield; and he consented to our private marriage.

On the day previous to that fixed on for the ceremony, Capt. Tracey, a particular friend of the late Mr. Stanhope, and also an acquaintance of my own, returned to his house in the neighbourhood of the vicarage, after an absence of several months, which had kept him ignorant of all that was passing there; and, shocked by the unexpected tidings of his friend's death, he immediately hastened to visit Agnes, and administer to her such consolation or services as his situation in life enabled him to offer. The tender

interest which he appeared to take in her welfare created in my bosom a jealous alarm which I had not art enough to conceal, the cause of which he soon penetrated. He hastened to relieve it, by informing us that he was just married; and that the chief motive of his present visit was to offer Miss Stanhope an asylum with his wife;—for, perfectly acquainted with the situation of his late friend's family and connections, he knew that she must now be embarrassed where to find a proper home. The sincerity of his friendship, and the probity of his character, rendered the offer particularly welcome and important.—I had fixed on no eligible plan. I thought that, sanctioned by the presence of a married woman of respectability, I could visit my Agnes unsuspectedly, while it remained necessary to conceal our marriage.—At that moment indeed, I knew not whether I durst *ever* divulge it to my father; and, rejoiced to have found a friend at a crisis of such

such difficulty, I confided to Captain Tracey our situation, and our motives for secrecy; requesting that he would extend that temporary protection to my wife which he had so kindly offered to Miss Stanhope. Zealously interesting himself in our plans, he professed himself doubly happy that he could befriend us both.—We were married in his presence; and a few days afterwards Agnes was placed with Mrs. Tracey, still retaining her maiden name; and I returned to Cambridge, accompanied by her brother; exulting that I had secured to myself the dearest object of my wishes, and blinded to all the dangers which might ensue from my inconsiderate precipitation, by the felicity of satisfied passion and the gaiety of present happiness. At every succeeding visit which I made to my adored wife, (stealing away from college on various pretences of business or amusement, and sometimes daringly absconding without even attempting to give a reason for my absence,)

sence,) I found her more lovely, more precious, than before! and, quite intoxicated by my fatal happiness, I still forgot that there was any future beyond our next promised meeting; though revolving time hastened towards the period which would oblige me to return to my father, far, far, from Agnes!—and though another more interesting circumstance began to threaten us with the necessity of a still-longer separation, or a discovery more fatal than either. But our kind friends, the Traceys, ever zealous for our welfare, provided against this new embarrassment, by privately removing my Agnes to London, as soon as her altered form could no longer be concealed; and at her departure I returned to Conway-castle, where I spent an interval of agonizing suspense, which could only be fully compensated for when, at the end of three months, I again rejoined my wife at her former habitation, and received to my bosom a sweet and endearing pledge of the most innocent

cent and fervent love that ever warmed the breasts of mortals!

Let me pause at this period of my history, to contemplate the felicity of a *father of nineteen*, for the first time, holding in his arms, and with eager gaze wandering over the placid features of, *his child!*—the most precious gift of the first and dearest object of his love! My Agnes looked on with a chaste delight, while her lovely blushing face was agitated by fear lest any incautious transports should betray me to the woman who nursed him as the parent of the darling boy.—She durst not meet my eye, lest it should hail her as the mother; she durst not speak to me, lest tears of rapture should mingle with her words; and she tore herself away from the overpowering scene with a look of eloquent and passionate tenderness which never, never, can be wiped from the canvas of memory, should I live to see the dawning of a second

cond world! The nurse, to whose care our son was consigned, was the tenant of a cottage within a short walk of Captain Tracey's house, where he was immediately under his mother's eye, without endangering the secret of his birth.—It was given out that he was the son of an intimate friend of Captain Tracey's, who was absent at sea; and that the mother had died in child-bed. I have no reason to suppose that this woman could be the author of the discovery which followed; for the most effectual precautions had been taken to prevent her knowing from what part of the kingdom the child had been brought; and she seemed to have so little curiosity respecting him, that she did not even inquire his name or age.—He was christened Ferdinand, which was Captain Tracey's name; and this was the only appellation by which he was distinguished. One day, after a longer absence than usual from the place where centered all my solicitude, I returned unexpectedly

to

to Captain Tracey's; too impatient to repay myself for this painful delay, which had been occasioned by unavoidable circumstances, to use the customary precaution of waiting to inquire by letter whether I might safely venture to visit my concealed treasures.—I was picturing to my gay and delighted fancy the joy with which Agnes would receive her returning truant, in spite of this first instance of his apparent neglect, when, as I drew near, I was startled from the pleasing reverie by observing that a dead stillness hung around the house, of which all the lower shutters were closed.—It was not till after repeated ringings that the gate was opened by a female servant, who on seeing me hastily retreated. A groom presently appeared from the opposite side, as I was rushing in, beset by a thousand dreadful presages; and my first incoherent question was to ask for his master. He replied briefly, that he was gone to sea. "Where are the ladies then?" cried I, with trembling-

trembling eagerness; "and why does the house look so deserted?" "Ah, sir!" he replied, shaking his head, "I doubt you will not thank me for telling you!" "What do you mean?" I faltered out: "Is not my Agnes, is not Miss Stanhope, here?" Still the fellow seemed irresolute how to answer me.—Gracious God! what were then the boiling terrors of my soul? Every frantic passion was awakened; but the predominating impulse of the moment was rage against the man who thus seemed with wilful barbarity to mock my dreadful curiosity by delay, and I cried out furiously,—"Tell me instantly, fellow! what has happened to Miss Stanhope! Keep me a moment longer in suspense, and I will shoot you!" and I pointed a travelling pistol at his head. "She is gone!—carried off then!" said he, in a tone of sympathy which even in that moment of agony penetrated and softened me.—"Gone!" echoed my sinking heart.—"Keeper of my happiness! whither is

she

she gone?" I flew, I hardly breathed, till I reached Mrs. Tracey's apartment. She was stretched upon a couch, pale and languid from excessive weeping; and my wild interrogations increased her distress to a degree which for some minutes deprived her of all power of utterance. At length she told me the dreadful tidings, which blasted my heart, and severed me for ever from happiness!—Immediately after breakfast that morning, Agnes had gone out to visit her child at the cottage of the nurse. Surprised by the length of her stay, Mrs. Tracey, who was slightly indisposed, dispatched a servant to request her return; and the alarming, though incoherent, relation which he brought back induced her, ill as she was, to hasten to the cottage herself, and learn the particulars of what she dreaded to believe. The incoherent relation was too true! While Agnes was caressing the child, a band of ruffian-looking men rushed suddenly into the house;

house; and, telling her that they had orders for her arrest, commanded her to surrender herself and child, without irritating them by complaints or resistance, which would be equally vain. There was no one near to defend my poor alarmed girl! The nurse was the only person, besides herself, in the house; and they were not within call of any other habitation; and, though Agnes fainted, and remained some time insensible, they waited her recovery, and effected their designs without the approach of any interference to rescue her. One of them, who seemed the master of this band of savages, perceiving her revive, pulled from his pocket some paper, and commanded her to write what he dictated. She refused:—she was utterly unable to comply! Finding that she had not power to execute the death-warrant of her happiness herself, he wrote for her the following lines; which, having guided her

hand

hand to sign, they lifted her and the child into a carriage with the blinds drawn up, and drove away with violent rapidity.

TO LORD STAVORDALE.

"MY LORD,

"I LEAVE you for ever! and release you from all engagements, as the father of my child,—a minor, and the heir of an illustrious family,—is precluded by law from disposing of himself in marriage without the concurrence of his natural or deputed guardians; and I acknowledge every promise you have made of uniting yourself to Agnes Stanhope to be illegal and void. You need not, my Lord, attempt to trace my flight: it is voluntary on my part; and, before you read this, I shall be placed for ever beyond your reach!—Reconcile yourself to a separa-

separation which I cannot but own we have both justly merited, and receive the last adieu of

AGNES STANHOPE."

I tore in pieces the accursed scroll, and trampled it under my feet, while my whole frame trembled with convulsive rage and anguish. "Agnes leave me voluntarily! Agnes release me from all engagements!"—"What black infamous forgery!" cried I.—"Is she not my wife, my lawful wife?—my own by every tie human and divine? She is, she shall be, mine! Not earth and heaven combined shall keep us asunder!"—I snatched up my pistols, and attempted to rush out of the house, wild and careless how I acted, so that I could grasp at any possibility of recovering my Agnes. But Mrs. Tracey opposed my violence, and prevented my departure. She caught my arm. "What would you do, my Lord?" cried she with

with imploring earnestness; "how can you be thus rash and impetuous, when perhaps your secret may yet be unrevealed? You cannot possibly now overtake Agnes, for so many hours have intervened since her departure, that you may be certain she is by this time beyond your reach. We have indeed reason to fear from the style of this paper, and the circumstances of her departure, that your connection with her has been discovered by Lord Wallingford; but it does not appear that he suspects your marriage; or, if he does, he only endeavours to make it seem liable to annulment.—In less than two years you will be of age, and at full liberty to act for yourself. Can you not till then dissemble, and, if you find it may yet be done, keep from your father that secret of your marriage which you have hitherto guarded at the expence of so much painful restraint? You may rely on Agnes's constancy and unyielding faithfulness; and, if there is

yet

yet a probability of your being reunited to her, surely it will best be secured by your own caution and pretended indifference." Indifference! cried I; and a flood of scalding tears for the first time overflowed my cheeks.—I could add no more; my feelings were overcharged and softened; my heart full almost to bursting; and I threw myself down, and wept without controul.—My tears allayed the fever of my spirits; and, convinced by the justice of Mrs. Tracey's arguments, I now thought only of returning to Cambridge, and seeking for comfort by mingling my lamentations with those of the brother of my lost Agnes.

I set out thither early next morning, and imparted to him the dreadful tidings. His anguish, his phrenzy, were scarcely inferior to my own.—He discovered a degree of passion on this occasion, into which I had never thought his steady nature capable of being betrayed; which, while

while it convinced me of his boundless attachment to the dear object of my own regrets, riveted more than ever the bonds of our friendship, and was to me a grateful proof how much my Agnes was worthy of being beloved.

Eagerly bent on revenging the cruel outrage, he determined immediately to set out in quest of her; to go to the Earl of Wallingford, and demand her at once, by the authority of law, the moment our presumption of her having fallen into his hands could be ascertained Who but the Earl, we judged, could have been thus interested in separating us? Were the invader of our peace but some wanton ravisher, Agnes would have been his only prey, and not the poor helpless child,—the pledge that Agnes was devoted to another! After some farther consultation, however, we agreed, that we would on no account allow ourselves to be provoked into an acknowledgement of the marriage;

even though our suppressing it should expose my spotless wife to calumny. I felt all the propriety of Mrs. Tracey's advice, and knew that if Agnes was really in the power of my father, my only chance of regaining her must be through dissembling, and endeavouring by an affected supineness to do away the belief of my continued attachment to her, until my being of age should empower me legally to claim her as my own.—By the merest accident in the world, the certificate of our marriage was at this time preserved in my hands; and, as I thus possessed the means of proving it, whenever it should become expedient, I heeded not the imputations by which her fair fame might temporarily be tarnished; I conceived no present sacrifice too great which could afford a hope of assisting ultimately to restore her to me; and Edward thought with me, that his sister's preservation (for which our knowledge of my father's character taught us to tremble) was too valuable

luable to be endangered for the sake of confuting an impotent and groundless calumny.—The calumny which we foresaw soon spread abroad; but it was chiefly levelled against myself: I was represented as a cruel seducer, who had deceived an innocent girl whom I ought to have protected; but this was not considered by the gayer part of my commentators as such an offence against honor as my subsequent conduct, in having, as it was said, introduced her, under the character of my wife, into a respectable family, where there were females of reputation, who could not but be materially injured by having so long afforded an asylum to a woman of her stamp.—It was added that Captain Tracey could not as a man of honor pass over such an insult to his wife; and now that it was publicly detected, he would certainly find it necessary to call me to account on his return home, if he did not consider the arm of law a fitter weapon than the sword to

 chastise

chastise the insolence of *a boy* like me! I smiled contemptuously at these futile and groundless inventions: I even thought it was meritorious to confirm them, since they were lenient to my Agnes; and I persuaded Edward Stanhope, that it was best, for the interest of our mutual cause, that we should separate, and discontinue every appearance of our former intimacy, in order to induce the belief of his resenting my imputed treachery to his sister.—We parted accordingly; he setting out on the commencement of his vain search after the dear fugitive, whom he was destined never more to behold; while I remained at college, with a breaking heart, till the arrival of the next vacation, when I joined my father in London.

My first object on reaching London was to steal out privately in quest of Stanhope, who was there before me,—buoying up my mind, from the mere encouragement which uncertainty allowed to me,

with

with the fond and visionary hope that he might now be able to give me tidings of Agnes. Visionary, alas, indeed!—He had obtained no intelligence respecting her; and his fears were rather augmented than lessened by the belief which he had now adopted, (from the testimony of what he thought unquestionable evidence,) that the Earl was *not* the author of our misfortune, nor any way concerned in it! Lord Wallingford's conduct to myself confirmed this opinion, and delivered me up to the most hideous and distracting conjectures. He told me that he had heard the calumny which fame had been busy to raise against me; and affected to inquire into the grounds whence it had originated with an entire ignorance of the real circumstances, and with the air of a man who is deeply interested for the fame and honor of his family.—He received my vague and tremulous replies as a confirmation of the dishonor which he dreaded, and seemed to be plunged in

deep distress by the conviction of his son's misconduct. Not proud, not resentful, were his reproaches; they were pointed with new art. He called me the destroyer of the honor of my family!—but he called me so with melting and overwhelming tears. They were the first I had ever seen him shed, and excited feelings little inferior to those which would have attended the reality of all the guilt that was imputed to me. In an agony of filial tenderness and contrition, I had once well nigh thrown myself on his mercy, by confessing the whole truth; when a sudden suspicion, drawn from my former experience of his artifices, darted across my mind, and restrained my tongue.—It occurred to me, that this plaintive style of reproof, so different from his usual storms of rage or vengeance, was but employed to probe my feelings, in order to discover whether or not I was really married; and, mpressed by this suspicion, I left his presence

presence without venturing to trust myself with any effort to mollify his emotions. Some months passed away in gloomy uncertainty, during which, to my astonishment, my father never again renewed this painful subject to me. My Agnes, my child, were still lost to me; and, though my father treated me with unusual gentleness, an air of distance and of affecting melancholy seemed purposely diffused over his countenance and manners, in order to keep alive in my mind the recollection, that he considered me as an offender, and mourned my dereliction from honor. While my affairs remained in this posture, the Earl one day desired to speak with me alone; and after some preface, in which he represented to me that *my* errors and *his* lenity entitled him to my implicit obedience, he informed me, that a highly honorable and advantageous treaty of marriage had been made for me with the only daughter of the Duke of B. one of the richest

 heiresses

heiresses in the kingdom.—I started! I shuddered! Strong horror and disgust convulsed every nerve; and, quite thrown off my guard by the suddenness of the unexpected proposal, I exclaimed with vehemence, "Rather bid me die! rather rid me at once of an existence already too loathsome to be borne!" He attempted to reason with me calmly, and pointed out all the advantages of this connection that could flatter pride or rouze a latent ambition: but how could pride or ambition speak to a heart which love had wholly usurped, and wedded faith bound up with Agnes Stanhope's? I was by turns firm, obstinate, and impatient, in opposing all his instances; and at length his stifled rage burst forth upon me, doubly intemperate from suppression. "I can bear long," he cried, (in a tone of voice which still thunders in my ear,) "I can bear long, but not always! I can bear much, but not all! Stretch my forbearance beyond a certain point,

point, exasperate my passions as *you* have done, and the long-pent volcano deals not more relentless desolation!" and with these portentous words he left me. I was no sooner alone, than I began to dread that this awful warning imported consequences not less fatal to Agnes than to myself. It now appeared to my startled fancy, that he knew all, and meditated to punish me through those dearer parts of me, my Agnes and my child.—I hastened to find him; and, throwing myself at his feet, implored pardon for my hasty opposition of his wishes, which I said had been caused as much by surprise as reluctance. I neither knew not what I did, nor what I said; and, in the midst of my tumults, he extorted from me an equivocal and vague assent to the measure he proposed.

I accompanied him next day to wait on my allotted bride, who was not unknown to me, though the entire pre-oc-

cupation of my heart and mind had hitherto blinded me to her attractions.—Prepared as I was to meet her with aversion or indifference, I found Lady Frances S. so artlessly beautiful, so unaffectedly elegant, that, had my heart been devoted to any other woman than my gentle and affectionate Agnes, it must instantly have been her conquest. If Agnes was attractive by a modest simplicity, an affecting bashfulness, which kept her a stranger to all the modifications of fashionable manners, Lady Frances was not less charming by the gracefulness with which she supported them.—Lofty and high born, as her air denoted her, there was a fascinating friendliness in her address which irresistibly engaged confidence; a bright ingenuousness in her every look or word, which in a moment declared that pride and prejudice were utterly unknown to her; and that she had not a thought which need blush to stand revealed. Possessed of an even

and

and perennial vivacity, which diffused itself over her whole conduct, and gave grace and spirit to her simplest action, her every motion was eloquence, her every word persuasion! I found it impossible to preserve towards her the cold and neglectful absence of manner by which I had hoped to disgust her with my reluctant and feigned suit. It was not in humanity to chill, by a churlish reserve, the gay irradiating glow of confidence and cheerfulness with which, conscious of desert, she seemed secure of my friendship, and willing to honor it with a liberal return. Assured, however, that an angel could not wean my heart from Agnes, I admired her various fascinations without fear, and without emotion. Though I did not avoid her conversation, I, at least, never wilfully sought her society.—But my father carefully improved every opportunity of excusing to her the want of ardor in my supposed addresses, by ascribing it to my

respect, and the timidity of youth; and it was not long ere with remorse I discovered, that she had given me all her heart; and learned, what had been till now carefully concealed from me, that it was in consequence of the discovery of a secret partiality, which she had long honored me with, that the Duke, her father, had first projected the proposed alliance. The moment of these discoveries was the last of my reluctant deceit. I knew Lady Frances to be generous and just; I had found her the most candid and liberal of human beings; and I determined immediately to confide to her my whole unhappy story, to stop at once the progress of a dangerous deception, and convince her of my esteem. Her reception of this unexpected confidence justified my opinion of her exalted merit. Blushing, trembling, and astonished, she heard not of my union with another without emotions which told me that I was indeed too truly beloved: but she

soon

soon resumed her firmness; and, ever true to the native generosity of her soul, seemed entirely to forget herself in lamenting my misfortunes.—She exerted all her art to sooth me, and revive my hopes; and, dreading nothing more than to augment my suffering, by betraying emotions that might perpetuate the self-accusation with which I could not avoid reflecting on my late dishonorable though unwilled deceit, she even assumed an air of gaiety, and rallied me by the assurance that her heart was too volatile to break. She then inquired into the measures I had taken for discovering my lost Agnes; advised with me in regard to my father, whose highest indignation I had now double cause to expect; and, with generosity unparalleled, she insisted upon taking on herself the blame of putting a stop to the proposed alliance, by formally forbidding the continuance of my addresses as a lover, whenever she could devise a plausible reason to justify the apparent capri-

ciousness

ciousness with which such a change must stamp her conduct.—We had just ended this interesting conversation, in which my heart had been eased of the burdensome oppression of conscious duplicity, and my spirits, exhilarated by consequent self-satisfaction, were raised by a momentary intoxication which peculiarly unfitted me for bearing tamely with reproach, when I was surprised by receiving from Edward Stanhope a billet couched in the most resentful and, as I thought, insulting terms; wherein, after having insinuated that my conduct scarcely entitled me to the lenity with which he still wished to listen to my justification, he requested me to meet him, at a place which he named, at three o'clock.—Unfortunately for my reason, it was now exactly that hour; and I met him with all the pride and irritation which his note had excited still alive in my bosom.—Hardly using the common forms of salutation at meeting, his first question was

to

to ask me imperiously, what was the tendency of my attentions to Lady Frances S.? and whether it was in nature that I could have so far forgotten myself, as to think of an union with another, while I had not as yet obtained the slightest proof that the poor forlorn Agnes was not still alive, and resting all her hopes of happiness on a re-union with me,—the husband who seemed already to have forgotten *her!* With the haughty consciousness of having nothing to reproach myself with in regard to Agnes, but (if it were possible) too warm, too extravagant, a love,—the corrosive anguish of which had bereft me of health and enjoyment from the moment of our separation,—I was not likely to hear patiently language so cutting and injurious. But he had presented to my view an image which melted my heart still more than his petulance had rouzed my resentment, and I determined only to punish him by being silent to his questions. Again he repeated them;

them; and again touched the string of tender feeling. My pride was subdued, and I burst into tears; now utterly unable to retort, or to answer him.—Too fatally he interpreted my tears: he called them those of cowardly remorse! of conscious villany! My soul was now stung by a keener sense of insult, but resolved to rise superior to it. Sensible that appearances strongly corroborated his mistake, and almost applauding the indignation which, however, I could not stoop to parly with, I only exclaimed, "This from Edward Stanhope! this from the brother of my Agnes!" and walked hastily away; fearful of embroiling myself in a groundless quarrel with one whom I had so long affectionately regarded, yet not sufficiently master of myself to make those explanations which could alone effectually reconcile us.

He did not attempt to oppose my departure; but I had not been above an hour

at

at home, when I received the following note from him.

"I can no longer doubt your villany; and, if your cowardice is not still superior to it, you will meet me alone, with your sword on, at the Grove, behind the White-horse, Islington, at five o'clock to-morrow morning.

E. STANHOPE."

At the time and place appointed I met him: but my passions were cooled by reflection. I regarded him rather with sorrow and pity than resentment; and, though I brought my sword, to shew that I was prepared for resistance, I came with the wish to reason rather than to fight.

His obstinacy in resentment, however, frustrated every effort to remonstrate with him. He disdained to listen to me, and instantly drew. At first I only defended myself;

myself; but, as the animal spirits heated, my passions became more violent; and, after some desperate lounges, I received his weapon in my left side, and fell. When I recovered from the insensibility which had overwhelmed me, I found myself lying on a bed, and Stanhope sitting by me, the image of despair.—I feebly faltered out, "Stanhope, I forgive you!—We were both equally to blame; you, in doubting my honor; and I, in refusing to explain myself earlier. My addresses to Lady Frances S. were but a temporary deception, which my father's tyranny compelled me to use.—She is acquainted with my real situation, and knows too feelingly that my heart could never swerve from its first object, were even my principles base enough to permit the violation of my faith." He heard me with the bitterest self-accusation; and then informed me, that the report which had reached him of my intended marriage was the day before confirmed by my father himself,

himself, whom he had accidentally met in the Park; and who had dwelt particularly on every circumstance that might tend to persuade him that my heart, as well as my faith, was wholly alienated from his unfortunate sister: that, thus confirmed in his error, he had still wished to delay his measures, until he had conversed with myself; but my haughtiness and evasion, operating upon passions already exasperated beyond controul, had at once confirmed his belief of my villany, and his burning desire of vengeance.

I assured him of my entire forgiveness, and entreated him to lose no time in flying from those farther fatal consequences of our mutual error which would overtake him if I died.—Life seemed, indeed, fast ebbing within me, and I could add no more:—but Stanhope would not leave me; and he remained by my bed-side, in a paltry inn at Islington, all that morning, without any interruption from the emissaries

emissaries of justice.—The duel, and its consequences, however, soon spread abroad; and, though I had endeavoured to conceal my name from the people who attended me, my situation was made known to my father before the evening, and he immediately came to me. Notwithstanding the expostulations of my surgeon, the Earl, shocked to see *his son* in such a place, insisted on having me removed without delay.

The fatigue of this exertion, joined to the irritation of my spirits, brought on a fever of the most alarming nature, which long rendered my life doubtful; though it was not friendly enough to cut the chain destined to be linked out by a thousand added miseries: and, while I lay beneath the torpor of a lingering disorder, unable to interpose or vindicate my friend, my cruel, my vindictive, father had the affair brought before a criminal court with such aggravating misrepresen-

presentations, that it was hardly possible for Stanhope to escape punishment, even had my recovery been certain. Lord Wallingford's powerful influence was not to be contended against by the unknown and unpatronized Edward Stanhope: he represented him as a turbulent and dissolute young man, with whom such broils had been frequent, and whose daring passions no law could restrain; and urged his sentence with such vigorous prosecution, that, though by this time I was pronounced out of danger, he was banished the kingdom for a term of fourteen years, and I saw him no more! O Stanhope! my friend, my brother! I cursed thy unjust sentence with all the bitterness of resentment; I lamented the severe destiny which, through the train of *my* misfortunes and *my* mistakes, had banished thee from thy country, and burst asunder the sweet links of thy early friendships and local partialities:—but now it is mine to envy thee! Happy, happy, is thy

thy fate, compared with mine! Thy hands are not stained with murder! thy spirit is not broken by the preying dejection of remorse! Exasperated beyond all caution by the unjust severity of my friend's punishment; determined, if possible, to obtain a revocation of his sentence; I was no sooner alone with Lord Wallingford, (after discovering what had been wrought against Stanhope during my confinement,) than, loudly exclaiming against his injuries, and hurried into imprudence by the violence of my father's revilings, I betrayed the secret of my marriage; and vindicated Stanhope's resentment against me, by acknowledging him the just avenger of his sister's apparent wrongs!— The Earl affected to hear the declaration of my marriage with astonishment and indignation, as what he had never even suspected; and, after many severe reproaches for a breach of filial duty and forgetfulness of my rank, (which, he said, I must have been conscious were of all

other

other offences least likely to obtain his forgiveness,) he commanded me never more to entertain a thought of being reunited to Agnes, or of extricating her brother; for that it was in his power utterly to annul a marriage made in non-age without his consent; and it was only an aggravation of Mr. Stanhope's misconduct, that he had been accessary to a contract so clandestine and illegal.

I saw that I could expect no justice, no redress, by opposing any fiat of Lord Wallingford's. He had art and interest enough to convert the weapons of law into instruments of the blackest fraud! He was cruel and violent enough to be capable of sacrificing life, as well as happiness, to the purposes of his ambition! and I shrunk from his reproaches and his threats,—languid by ill-health, and exhausted by sorrow,—into all the supineness of despair. I was soon rouzed from this state of feeble inertion by a sense of

keener

keener misery. One day, while carelessly wandering over a newspaper which lay on my table, a paragraph, under the head of *suicide*, caught my eye; and, perhaps by a congeniality of feeling, riveted my attention, and thrilled my bosom with dreadful expectation. — Oh! picture my distraction! The forlorn Suicide, whose name and fate were exposed to public view, as if there were no friends to mourn her loss, no private feelings to be wounded by the recital,—the unhappy youthful mother, who was described in poverty and wretchedness, hanging over her dead child till wild insanity had impelled self-murder, — the beautiful wretch, whose loveliness even now attracted comment, — was called Agnes Stanhope! — and characterized by circumstances which could belong to no other than my wife!

Horror! grief! distraction!—Faint and unequal is every term of woe to express

express what I then felt! the tidings were confirmed by authority which left me no room for doubt; and a twelvemonth passed by me, during which I may truly say that I never once closed my eyes to an unbroken slumber, nor raised my head to the hope of a momentary enjoyment. My passions, however, were now quite subdued by long excess; and, though I still regretted Agnes with unabating constancy, I became reasonable in my grief, and anxious to surmount it. I found that I had obligations to such an effort, which gratitude could no longer dispense with, and which every sentiment of friendship and esteem called me to obey. The amiable, the respectable, Lady Frances S. in the full bloom of beauty and the zenith of admiration, had forgone both for me. —She had been my unchanging friend and comforter; had watched over me, and mourned for me, (regardless of what might be the comments of little minds on a friendship, the purity of which few could

comprehend,) till, imbibing all my melancholy, she had tarnished her charms by the sad contagion, and blighted by mental disease the season of her promising and happy youth. I was deeply penetrated by her kindness and her virtues; and, though I felt that my heart could not repay all its debt to her, I conceived that duty, warmed by gratitude, might be taught to wear the aspect of genuine love; and that a deception of affection, which I would put it out of her power to suspect, could not surely injure her, even if she had been of a nature to require more.—But I knew that she was of all women most easily deceived in this respect; for the boundless regard she honored me with, and the entire confidence she reposed in me, made her liable to be persuaded by the commonest appearances. Her soul was too exalted to be insensible of its own desert; and she was thus raised above that fear of injury which can only

only gain ascendency in weak and groveling minds.

My father had never ceased importuning me; and even the Duke of B. still condescended to express his wishes that I would accede to the proposed alliance, to which there was now no obstacle. In short, I was united to Lady Frances S. and, in the gaities attending our nuptials, the charms of my amiable bride, and the brilliant prospects which now awakened a long-dormant ambition, my unhealed heart obtained a temporary and illusive happiness.

Lady Frances's renovated gaiety and charms; her undeviating attention to my wishes; the constant exertion of her talents and accomplishments, to please me alone; gratified my vanity, (if that may be called vanity which was only self-congratulation,) to find that I constituted the happiness of one to whom my obligations

 were

were so infinite; and, if I did not love her with all that romantic ardor which had characterized my attachment to Agnes, I at least did ample justice to her merits, and had the satisfaction of knowing that she placed entire confidence in my affection.

Lady Frances had taken into her protection a very engaging little girl, (the orphan-child of one of her earliest female friends,) who falling into a deep decline, it was advised that she should be carried to try the influence of a warmer climate; and the South of France was proposed, which Lady Frances had a wish to visit. We set out thither, about four months after our marriage, accompanied only by domestics; and, after a stay of six weeks at Montpelier, and making a short tour, during which we had the satisfaction to see our young charge recover daily, we arrived in Paris. Here novelty and gaiety attracted us: and, after

after having been presented at Versailles, and introduced to a numerous circle of the first nobility, (who loaded us with flattering attentions, urging from day to day our prolonged stay,) we at length determined to fix our abode for a few months in Paris; and I hired a hôtel in the Fauxbourg of St. Germain, in the neighbourhood of a family with whom we were become intimate.—There was a public cistern, in a court behind our hôtel, which my chamber-windows overlooked; and I was one day amusing myself with sketching a motley group of women and children, who were crowding round, and drawing water for their families, when, some of my servants coming out, and disputing the right of these people to the use of the cistern, which they conceived to belong exclusively to my hôtel, a quarrel arose, of such unbecoming violence on the part of my servants, that I found it necessary to hurry down and in-

terpose my authority in person, to prevent more serious outrage.

Among the group, a beautiful little boy attracted my particular notice: he seemed about two years old; and his whole appearance forcibly pressed upon my mind the reflection that "such would now have been my lost son!" He was somewhat better dressed than the other miserable-looking children, who accompanied the woman; and his rosy health and vivacity, together with the beauty of his features, gave him an air of superiority which I did not fail to remark. I drew him towards me, and, gazing on him with earnestness, while he fixed his sparkling black eyes with full confidence on mine, I fancied that I traced in his infantine beauties some similarity to features which were indelibly engraven on my memory. My heart fluttered violently; my sight grew dim. Nature recognized the child; and, on inquiring his name, I found that he

he was indeed my son! Never shall I forget that moment!—I must be brief with what follows.—Conducted by the woman who attended him, I accompanied him to his home; and there, in an obscure and miserable lodging, with a form preyed on by disease, and a face faded by anguish;—there, scarcely raising her head at my approach; scarcely borrowing one emotion from the cold usurpation of despair to hail me with;—I beheld—Agnes Stanhope, living! She was married to another! —She had been persuaded that her marriage with me was legally and irreversibly annulled; forced into the arms of a wretch every way unworthy of her; torn from her native country; cut off from all communication with those who would have flown to redress her injuries; and, at length, by false representation taught to believe herself utterly despised and abandoned by all who had once cherished her, she was become dead to every hope, torpid to every former affection! The author of all

all these wrongs was my father:—I, their fatal cause, was her husband,—the first object of her love; wedded to another in compliance with those projects of ambition which had undone *her!*—and the meek, the timid, the affectionate, Agnes, now frowningly reproached me with all these miseries, and repulsed every effusion of my glowing over-charged heart with cold and obstinate incredulity! "Her wrongs were past redress," she said; "her miseries drawing towards their final close! and, even were it possible to credit my excuses, her belief of them could avail nothing but to awaken feelings which had been long extinguished; and which, if awakened, could serve no end but to give a new sense to wretchedness." Yet she seemed to feel that comfort which the unhappy derive from complaint; and, though her words were calm and unresentful, she continued from time to time to shock my soul with new and bitter disclosures of her sufferings.

The

The man, whom Lord Wallingford had forced her to marry, had been my own confidential servant, a fellow who had attended me at college; and, accompanying me on my clandestine visits to Agnes, had had the presumption to love her, and to pave the way to obtaining her, by discovering to my father, as a criminal connection, the innocent intercourse of wedded happiness. He himself knew not at this time that we were really married; and Lord Wallingford paid little attention to what he considered as a trivial offence of youthful passion; till, afterwards discovering the respectability of the friends with whom Agnes and my child resided, he suspected the truth. Causing diligent inquiry to be made, he detected the whole; and placed beyond my reach those darling objects of my affections, by a train of deep-laid treachery, which could only be equalled by the cruelty with which it was executed. I now saw that the relation of their death had been an artful

forgery of Lord Wallingford's to accelerate his design of uniting me to Lady Frances: and, execrating my own credulity and precipitation, I gave way to the most violent transports of anguish and regret.—Still, still, she went on to goad me with keener horrors! Altered, faded, as she was, her beauty retained sufficient attraction for licentious admiration; and she had of late been persecuted by the addresses of a young man of rank, whose visits her husband wilfully encouraged; and who even threatened her with the most brutal violence, if she persisted in her refusal of listening to him.

"She was watched as a prisoner," she said, "and could not escape from them: she was destitute of money and of friends; and whither could she fly?" Oh! how my soul thirsted for revenge! At this instant her husband entered, accompanied by the very man of whom she spoke.—I instantly drew my sword, and attacked the

the former with desperate violence. Agnes feebly attempted to separate us; but I pushed her away, and in a moment laid the villain dead at my feet. I then paused on my deed with a gloomy compunction; and shuddered to think that my hands were stained with murder! Unaffected by this work of death, unmoved by my emotions, Agnes with a look of chill, but stern, reproof, asked me "Why I had added murder to perfidy?"—Remorse had but prepared my passions for a wilder ferocity; and,—monster!—savage that I was!—I drew my sword a second time, and sheathed it in her innocent bosom! Just once she raised her eyes upon me, ere the shades of death encircled them; and that last look—(O bitter aggravation of wretchedness!)—beamed only pity and relenting love! Where was then a hell like that within my bosom!—The stranger, whom as yet I had scarcely noticed, had not once attempted to interpose, nor even to raise an alarm; but now, when I had

 nothing

nothing more to act which could add another pang to anguish or remorse, he addressed me with sympathy rather than reproach; and, calling me by my name, entreated that I would lose no time in flying the kingdom; urging that I might leave it to him to hush up the affair, until I should be beyond the reach of justice.—I now looked at him astonished, and recognized the Comte de l'Avignon; a young nobleman who had lately been introduced to me, and in whose favor I had found myself singularly prepossessed. He interested himself in my safety with a zeal and promptness of which I myself was utterly careless and incapable, and which excited my astonishment not less than my gratitude; for, conceiving that the most natural impulse of a mind young and generous would be to hurl instant vengeance on the ruffian-murderer of a beautiful and helpless female, I was already prepared to drop, unopposingly and resigned, beneath his sword; when the

words

words "for the sake of your wife!—for the sake of Lady Frances!" met my ear; and I once more thought of life and safety.—Agnes was gone—past recall! I was indeed a criminal in the sight of heaven; but I might save the honor of my family from disgrace.—Every throb of my bleeding heart bore testimony that my crimes were unpremeditated; and I might yet save my amiable wife from the misery which the knowledge of them must inflict. These arguments passed rapidly through my mind, and fixed my determination. Wildly and briefly I related to the Comte the principal events which had brought about this dreadful tragedy. Through his interest and exertions in my service, the buz of rumour was suspended for a time, and I found means to pass unnoticed by the blood-hounds of law, until my affairs were properly arranged for leaving the kingdom without the abruptness which would have alarmed suspicion. —De l'Avignon offered himself to be the guardian

guardian of my son, whom I found it would be impossible for me to acknowledge without exposing to the world my father's villany, and rendering it necessary to explain to Lady Frances that dreadful story which it concerned all that remained of her future peace to keep her ignorant of.—I likewise foresaw, that, in order to vindicate his own conduct, it would be the Earl's first endeavour to disprove his legitimacy, should I attempt to bring him up openly as the heir to the family titles and estates; and to introduce him to the world in any other character was what I never could have brooked. I well knew the extremes of fraud and violence of which my father was capable: I no longer respected him, and all ties of confidence or esteem were for ever dissolved between us! Yet, still retaining in his behalf some lingering prejudices of nature; still reluctant to inflict that deepest wound which would be the consequence of public dishonor to pride and passions like his; I determined

determined to shun being provoked into an application to law; as this could only be made by adducing proofs of cruelty and illegal coercion which would infallibly bring him to disgrace, if not to rigorous punishment. On the other hand, by concealing my son for a time, it might be in my power, in the course of nature, to establish his legitimacy unopposed, when my father should be no more! I therefore yielded to so many powerful reasons; and placed my Ferdinand in the protection of the Comte de l'Avignon, with a sum of money equivalent to the expences of his education; and a liberal pecuniary acknowledgement to the generous friend who thus stood forward to be his voluntary protector, which the state of his finances at this time rendered not unwelcome, and which he was superior to the false pride of affecting to refuse. Having made these arrangements, and framed a plausible pretext to Lady Frances for hastening our departure so much earlier than we had at

first

first intended, I set out with her on our return to England.—Though I knew that the late dreadful tragedy already began to be circulated in whispers, I had taken such precautions to prevent its reaching Lady Frances's ears, or creating in her the slightest suspicion of my having been the perpetrator, that, amid all my misery, I found comfort in the belief that she, at least, was saved from partaking in it;—and, hurrying rapidly from place to place, forcing myself to take a part in every thing which seemed to interest her, I strove to wear an air of cheerfulness and contentment, while my brain was dizzy with dreadful reflection, and my heart bursting with anguish. But, in proportion to my efforts to deceive her, I perceived that her own bosom was labouring with some increasing disorder, the cause of which she, too, seemed studious to conceal. I saw the roses, which recovered health and happiness had but lately restored

stored to her cheeks, again sickening, again gradually forsaking them:—I perceived that her sickly smiles were no longer those of genuine gaiety; and I at length gathered from her faltering and extorted confession, that she knew her husband *to be a murderer!* and with strange unparalleled aggravation, heightened the anguish of the dreadful secret, (which she had stolen like the Spartan boy, and suffered to prey upon her vitals by concealment,) by accusing *herself* as the origin of my misery and my crimes. In vain I reasoned against so groundless a chimera, by reminding her of all her unvarying goodness, her exalted kindness and generosity, to me, who had indeed deceived *her* and disturbed her peace. "Ah, Charles!" she would reply, with swimming and downcast eyes, "had I been less forward to discover my unfortunate partiality, less persevering in my destructive attachment, your union with Agnes

Agnes had perhaps never been disturbed by your father's ambition;—and at this moment, instead of hiding in your bosom sorrow and remorse, your native virtues would have vegetated unobstructed, amid the peace and happiness which they were formed to purchase!" Alas! all my arguments were ineffectual to overcome this mistaken bias of feelings too refined, too generous, for humanity! My remorse, once disclosed, could no longer find a temporary respite in the necessity of concealment; and, while she contemplated it, and shuddered at my murders, her heart still clung around the *murderer* with doating and destructive fondness;—and to the slow poison of sorrow and self-accusation, her health became a hopeless prey.

I now forgot every past calamity in the torture of my present alarm. I redoubled my tenderness, my anxiety to convince her of my love, and sooth her

back

back to peace. She became every hour dearer and more precious to me;—every hour, which took something from her wasting form, and transfixed my bosom with a pang more acute! Still generous, still heroic, she persisted to the last in striving to conceal her sufferings, and cheat me with a forced display of cheerfulness. My sorrow was grateful to her, considered as a proof of love; but she could not bear to see me suffer *for her*. Her last words were to comfort me!—her last breath expired in a smile of kind deceit!

Spirits of anguish and remorse! Frances was my third victim! Is the murderer permitted to live, while the innocent sicken of his crimes and die? Is my heart torpid, or my frame Herculean, that I am the only survivor of my own devastations?"********

The

The remainder of the Narrative (more of which is not necessary to these memoirs) was written after a lapse of three years; when, on returning to France to visit his son, the unfortunate Lord Stavordale became acquainted with the Comte de l'Avignon's real character and rapacious views. Finding himself, however, still under a necessity of concealing his son from the Earl, and that De l'Avignon had both the power and the inclination to injure him materially, should he refuse to accede to certain new demands which he made upon his purse, he determined on allowing his son to remain with him, rather than hazard a discovery by exasperating his insiduous confident; who, by a strange perversity of spirit, combining with his natural avarice, declared that no inducement should now bribe him to relinquish his charge. It was then that, with all his misanthropy revived and confirmed, he had devised that singular contract by which De l'Avignon's own interest was made

made security for Ferdinand's. Some time afterwards, in a conference with his old friend, Captain (now Admiral) Tracey, finding his health rapidly declining, he confided to him the whole of this transaction, and directed him to look out for his son's arrival in England, or to go in search of him to France, at the period of his minority, in case of his own decease before that time. The circumstance of his sudden death at the house of Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and at a distance from Admiral Tracey, who was then at sea, left in the hands of the former the casket which he had intended to deposit with him; and Mrs. Fitzwilliam, conceiving by his last ambiguous words that entire secrecy was required of her, had never named the subject to Admiral Tracey, so as to lead to the necessary elucidation respecting its right appropriation. When Admiral Tracey travelled into France to meet his daughter, it was with the double motive of also seeking Ferdinand, and imparting

imparting to him the story of his birth; and to this effect it was his intention to return by the way of Paris; when his design was agreeably anticipated, by finding Ferdinand at Montpelier.

The pride, the ambition, the revenge, so strongly depicted in Lord Stavordale's Narrative, and so extensively fatal in their consequences, were now hushed to rest in the bosom of Lord Wallingford. Remorse and tenderness divided his thoughts,—unavailing remorse for those injuries which were now forgotten in the grave; and the most softening tenderness towards the image and representative of his lost son, whom he folded in his arms, and wept over with uncontrouled emotion. Ferdinand returned his embraces with sensations of grateful pleasure, which in a moment atoned to him for all the former wrongs of fortune; while the idea of Adonia de Rosier, mingling with and animating these feelings, gave added brilliancy

liancy to the prospects now opening upon him, and a warmer fervor to the sentiments of filial affection which sprang up in his bosom with all the energy of a generous and forgiving nature.

Ah! what are the sensations of the deserted and unknown orphan, who has eaten the hard and coarse bread of dependence, and proudly, yet timidly, smarted to agony before the varnished insolence of a haughty patron, when he is for the first time pressed to the bosom of *a father*, and exultingly welcomed as the pride and the support of an illustrious family! Similar to these were the sensations of Ferdinand, though that father had so lately been a proud and cruel tyrant; such was now the exultation of Lord Wallingford, though Ferdinand was the child whom, blinded by false and cruel prejudices, he had once thrown unprotected on the world!

"O holy

"O holy Nature! thou dost never plead in vain.—There is not, of our earth, a creature bearing form and life,—human or savage,—native of the forest wild or giddy air,—around whose parent-bosom *thou* hast not a cord entwined of power to tie them to their offspring's claims, and at thy will to draw them back to thee!"

PIZARRO.

Eager to proclaim his new-found treasure, Lord Wallingford's first request was to be conducted to the family of his host. He was led to the apartment where they were assembled, supported between Ferdinand and Mr. Stanhope. With an air of mingled pride and pleasure, he announced to the astonished group the new Lord Stavordale; and, with strong but repressed emotion, gave them a brief relation of the discovery which had just been made. Admiral Tracey instantly sprang towards the Earl; and, while his honest countenance flushed with pleasure, and a sudden tear trembled in his eye, he thanked him repeatedly with as much warmth as if he had just conferred upon himself some benefit which could never be

be repaid. The rest of the company paid their compliments more promiscuously. Almeria held a handkerchief to her eyes, and protested that the scene was "quite too much for her!" and Miss Frances shook Ferdinand vehemently by the hand, exclaiming that she could have sworn he was an Englishman, in spite of his foreign name, the moment she first set eyes on him! and declared that she congratulated him with *all her soul!*

CHAP. XXXIX.

Hope ever is attended with a train
Of wakeful doubts; and where the sweet nymph harbours,
There flutters also her pale sister, Fear.

LADY SALISBURY.

IT was evening ere Ferdinand could obtain his grandfather's permission to return to Fort-Mervan; and he had not once ventured to speak to him on the subject nearest his heart. He conceived that it would be indelicate to importune him on a subject so foreign from those which occupied his own bosom, while the solemn

solemn and affecting scene by which it was impressed continued so recent. Striving, therefore, to persuade himself that he could have no opposition to fear from him, in regard to a woman lovely and high-born as Adonia, he determined to delay every communication respecting her until she should have made interest for herself, by being personally known to him. With an exulting heart, he took the road which returned him to his Adonia the acknowledged and adopted child of rank and fortune. Involved in pleasing ruminations, he gradually disengaged himself from his companions, Mr. Stanhope and Admiral Tracey; and rode slowly, at some distance behind them, in the profound silence of mental retirement, which they understood too well to break in upon; and which the sound of every voice but *Adonia's* would, in these moments, have been discordant to.

The evening was uncommonly fine, and the scenery through which their road lay exhibited some of the most picturesque on the island. The lovely serenity of the ocean, which had but just parted with the sun, and reflected, as on a glassy mirror, the bright saffron of the evening sky; the mild freshness of the air, the sweet and delicately modulated warblings of the nightingale, uniting with the merrier notes of the blackbird, which at this season is not less the "bird of eve;" the soft luxuriancy of the spring; the rich foliage of the trees, which in some places overhung their path, and in others nodded fantastically from the summit of a lofty precipice, or clothed the easy slope of some hill-side, and in majestic undulation exhibited the accumulating and glistening pearls of the falling dew;

> That thin blue mist which blends the lesser trees,
> And forward throws the tall and spirey pine,
> The rounded chesnut, and the brown-fring'd oak;—
> Sketching out many a soft'ned outline, that
> Undistinguish'd was 'mid day's full blaze; *

these,

* AGNES MORLEY.

these, and every varying feature of nature, as they proceeded, harmonized with the feelings of Ferdinand, and sublimed his soul. He had never seen the face of nature look so enchanting! They now came within view of the copse which shaded the western walls of Fort-Mervan: these trees appeared still more lovely! Ferdinand eagerly surveyed them, and, with the first view of the house, the white drapery of a female figure glided rapidly through their openings. She emerged from the woods, and, on seeing the party approach, turned, and waved her hand to her companion; who needed no second signal, but flew towards her. Ferdinand's heart instantly recognized the latter.—He darted from his horse, and hastened to indulge his fond hopes, by imparting his glad tidings, and hailing her as his own. Adonia's brightened colour faded as he approached, and her lips trembled to accost him; but, forcing an air of calm preparation for the worst,

"Am I," said she, "to salute St. Loudon or Lord Stavordale?—As either you must ever be welcome to Adonia; but certainly the former claims a preference, as having been best and earliest known." "Dearest Adonia!" exclaimed Ferdinand, "if *you* prefer St. Loudon, I will be St. Loudon still!" "To the utter rejection of Lord Stavordale?" cried she, revived by his manner. "No, my sweet Adonia! if I have ever been so fortunate as to be the object of your preference, make me so still; and Lord Stavordale's felicity will be complete." "Then you are indeed Lord Stavordale?" faltered out Adonia, overcome by a variety of pleasing but abrupt emotions. "Yes, Adonia! I have found a parent,—one who, I doubt not, will be propitious to *all* my wishes.—Fortune holds out her most flattering promises, and you alone can render them valuable, if the friendless destitute Ferdinand, who was solaced by Adonia's generous sympathy, may venture

ture to hope that she will also sympathise with him in his prosperity?"—"Surely!" replied Adonia, smiling sweetly, while covered with a lovely suffusion:—"If my Ferdinand is St. Loudon still; if he considers the gifts of fortune but as the delegated means of diffusing happiness to others; if he still prefers a life of usefulness to a life of indolent self-gratification; if he loves Adonia with that love which serves but to animate and perpetuate a more general philanthropy;—she is his!—and her heart's fullest sanction accompanies the gift."

By this time they were joined by Admiral Tracey and Mr. Stanhope, who had been employed in communicating to Johanna the success of their embassy; and Adonia, taking an arm of Ferdinand, prevented his reply, by accosting the gentlemen; and they all walked together to the house. Lord Arunville received the tidings of his rival's good-

fortune with a generous and unaffected congratulation that was highly pleasing to Adonia. Johanna seemed to have recovered in a moment all her long-banished cheerfulness; and even chatted with a degree of vivacity unusual to her character. Every heart rejoiced in unison with Ferdinand's and Adonia's, and a happier group never composed the social circle of an evening fire.

Obedient to his grandfather's wishes, Ferdinand returned to him early on the morrow. The Earl was extremely unwilling to part with him again; and the whole family at Beech-lodge united in urging him to make his residence with them, while his grandfather continued their inmate. This, however, Ferdinand politely, but warmly, declined.—"It was *impossible* that he could leave the Fort, where he had experienced so much kindness and attention, for any other house so immediately in its vicinity. It would be

be a preference both rude and ungrateful; and, as it would be in his power to pay his respects every day at Beech-lodge, he could, without entirely changing his abode, thus satisfy both duty and inclination." In short, he had a thousand powerful reasons to oppose to their reiterated request; yet still he forbore to name Adonia to his grandfather. So fluctuating are a lover's hopes! To-day, when he really wished, and had many opportunities to introduce the interesting subject, he found himself constantly restrained by sensations of doubt, of dread, lest the lovely dreams, inspired by yesterday, should be commanded to fade in the moment when his heart still glowed with their first vivid impressions.

Miss Staffordson once or twice spoke of the fair stranger, and praised her beauty and interesting sweetness of manners; and Ferdinand examined his grandfather's countenance, to see whether he listened

with approbation; but, when he did listen to these remarks, it was with a look of anxiety and alarm; and when Ferdinand saw that he immediately darted towards him keen but cautious glances of scrutiny, his whole frame trembled, and he became again unwilling to disturb his present dubious but happy expectations, by hastening the disclosure of that on which his future happiness was so largely dependent.—He even did not speak of his having discovered her as a relation; but determined, if possible, to keep every circumstance respecting her concealed, till the Earl could see, know, and acknowledge, her perfections himself.—Miss Frances Staffordson soon furnished an opportunity for the so-anxiously-wished introduction, by resuming the subject of the intended ball, which she persuaded her brother there was now another motive for; as it would be proper that some splendid entertainment should celebrate the singular and fortunate event, which had

had restored an heir to the illustrious house of their noble guest. The Earl's head-aches and peevishness no longer furnished an excuse for delaying it: his fractured limb had owed its worst consequences to his low spirits and irritability. The latter was now superseded by gaiety and good humour, and the former forgotten. He was the first to second Miss Frances's proposal; and declared that, in spite of his lame leg, he could almost be tempted to perform an active part in the dance himself. The ball was determined on, and immediately announced to the neighbourhood. Cards of invitation were sent to the whole of Admiral Tracey's guests severally; and the lively Miss Frances was good enough to accompany Sir Hedworth herself, on the previous visit of form to Lord Arunville and Mr. Stanhope.

The invitations were universally complied with; and three days afterwards

 Adonia,

Adonia, with a beating heart, was introduced to Earl Wallingford, by Admiral Tracey, as the daughter of the Marquis de Bellefonde. Composed and dignified as her air ever was, her beauty on this occasion was heightened by the blushes of a delicate anxiety to appear amiable in the eyes of the grandfather of her Ferdinand; and her dark mourning-dress, which she had not yet laid aside, and which was tastefully decorated by a well-arranged and moderate selection of jewels, gave every advantage that ornament could bestow to a face and form which needed not at any time the assistance of art to engage admiration.

Her charms, her air of high birth, and the feminine elegance and softness of her manners, produced all that fascination which Ferdinand had fondly anticipated. The Earl, who had once been distinguished for his gallantry towards the fair sex, and was still not insensible to the influence of beauty,

beauty, gazed on her with admiration and delight: he seated her beside himself, and became so riveted and charmed by her animated and polished conversation, that he seemed entirely to forget that he was old; or that she would perhaps have preferred the attendance of a younger cicisbeo. "You do not mean to persevere in refusing to dance?" said he at length; recollecting suddenly that he had detained her in conversation in such a manner that she could not *easily* have changed her place.—"I have seen you reject so many humble petitions, and repulse so many handsome petitioners, that I begin to be apprehensive that it is your politeness towards an old man that counteracts your inclination. I must retire and release you, or I shall certainly be branded with presumptuous selfishness, for monopolizing to myself the chief ornament of the ball-room:—these young fellows may justly dispute my right to so much good fortune." "And are you certain, my Lord,

Lord, that this potent belle, whom you are pleased to compliment, would wish you to release her?" replied Adonia, smiling. "Perhaps you have bound her by fetters too pleasing to be willingly relinquished. Perhaps the flowery bondage imposed by a welcome flattery would lose its charm were it to be attempted by any other?" "Ah! syren-flatterer thyself!" cried the Earl: "And so you would attempt to persuade me that you think the old grandfather an infinitely more agreeable companion in a *tête-à-tête* than his young grandson?" "Perhaps I may have a lawful right and title to bestow on both a portion of my regard," said Adonia, slightly blushing: "Should I presume to demand from both a return of affection, and found my claim on the right of consanguinity, would you, my Lord, be cruel enough to withhold yours?" "You are not surely my Ferdinand's wife?" cried the Earl, eagerly interrupting and gazing on her with surprise and delight.

"No!"

"No! I am only *his cousin!*" replied she; "but I have the honor to be your grand-niece, if you will permit me to be called so." "Amazement!" cried the Earl. "Hasten then to inform me by what means I am so fortunate as to find another lovely and already-beloved child in the daughter of the Marquis de Bellefonde?" "You perhaps know," Adonia replied, "that the late Mrs. Fitzwilliam had a sister who was left by her in a convent near Paris, designing to take the veil. That unfortunate sister, the daughter of your Lordship's youngest brother, was my mother; married to the Marquis de Bellefonde, after having decided in favor of a monastic life, and in consequence of her apostacy compelled to live concealed. She died while I was yet an infant; and, though my father's marriage was then divulged, my mother's real name and history were never known but by a few confidential friends, until the unhappy period which began my father's

ther's political misfortunes." "My niece, indeed!" exclaimed the Earl: "What a charming family I shall have!—I have heard your father's political career loudly applauded," continued he: "I have heard that he was most cruelly and unjustly persecuted, and unworthily disgraced."—"Oh yes!" cried Adonia with an enthusiasm which the subject always inspired:—"He was all honor and integrity! His life was a series of public benefits: his death!—" Tears prevented the description. "Permit *me* to be your father, amiable charming Mademoiselle de Rosier?" cried the Earl, warmly and kindly. "Invest me with that honorable title, and I shall ever be proud to regard you as my child." "You are too good, my Lord!" said Adonia inarticulately: "Pardon these foolish tears, I have not yet learned to restrain them, when the father I have lost rises before me in that venerable character which he supported so nobly, yet was so cruelly requited

quited for! But, if you please, we will not talk on this subject now;" and, dashing away her tears, she resumed her wonted benignity of countenance, and changed the discourse.

Hitherto the Earl had but slightly noticed Miss Fitzwilliam, although she had been properly introduced to him as his grand-niece. The recollection of those political animosities which had divided him from her father's family, and the disrespectful negligence which he had always observed towards her mother, from a consciousness of meriting from her nothing but dislike, had closed his heart against Johanna, and prevented him from distinguishing her by any other mark of attention than the mere ceremonial of meeting.—But now, when his interesting and fascinating Adonia called his attention towards her, by expatiating upon her good qualities, and expressing for her the warmest sisterly affection, he took an early

early opportunity of repairing his neglect, and was indeed as much pleased with her as Adonia had predicted. Seated between his fair nieces, with his beloved Ferdinand standing before them, and occasionally joining his sensible and spirited remarks with the animated conversation in which they were engaged, Lord Wallingford found a little world of happiness and self-complacency, such as he had never tasted since the death of his son. At length its effect was changed, and he became silent and thoughtful. Johanna strongly resembled her grandfather, that unfortunate brother of his who was permitted to die in obscurity, of poverty and a broken heart: and every word uttered by Ferdinand; every line of his face, and every glance of his dark and commonly-pensive eyes; presented before him his lost son, in some different and interesting similitude. Tears filled his eyes.—"What father is so happy as I," thought he, "surrounded by so endearing a group! but what father has

not

not better merited such happiness!" The reflection, however, was but momentary, and confined to his own bosom.

Lord Wallingford had too much pride not to easily find palliatives for all his own errors of conduct; and too much haughtiness to own himself in the wrong, beyond such involuntary confessions as were the birth of sudden emotion. He could repair acts of injustice, but it was almost inconsistent with his nature to acknowledge the commission of an unjust act; and this species of pride and self-deception taught him soon to forget all that was painful in the meeting with his newly-found relatives, and to taste only the pleasures of the renewed ties of parental affection, in the self-applause of at length acting the parental character with tenderness. Age and sorrow had softened the turbulence of his disposition; and the long abstraction of every object, which could nourish or satisfy the kindred affec-

tions,

tions, peculiarly disposed him to cherish and love these children of his blood, whom he found so amiable, and so sedulous to engage his affections. A few days after this meeting with his nieces, which had impressed Lord Wallingford with a disposition so propitious to Ferdinand's wishes, he ventured to make him acquainted with the state of his heart; and solicited his consent to his union with Adonia.—It was granted with pleasure, with delight; and Ferdinand thought himself the most favored of mortals! Flattered and caressed wherever he appeared; forming the pride and happiness of his grandfather, whose age and infirmities riveted the parental ties, and even whose former mistakes of conduct rendered him now still more interesting to a heart impressed by the high sense of filial duty; and blest by the undisguised acknowledgement of possessing the affection of one of the most amiable of women, whom his exulting heart rated as the brightest ornament of

her

her sex, Ferdinand knew not a desponding wish, but that of beholding all the world equally happy! Superior, as Adonia was, to all false delicacy or feigned indecision, when she had once determined to reward her lover's attachment with her hand, she however felt extremely reluctant to accede to his earnest petition for their immediate nuptials. So short a time had elapsed since the death of her excellent maternal friend, the Marchioness d'Estreaux, and so agitating were the scenes through which she had passed since this misfortune, that she not only revolted from the idea of shortening the season allotted by custom to bear about the outward trappings of woe, as an infringement of the respect due to the memory of the best of friends; but really found that her weakened spirits could ill support her to meet the most important event of her life with the dignity and composure suitable to an engagement which was the free choice of reason, as well of the tenderest

derest attachment. She felt too the propriety of being allowed some time to collect her thoughts, and consider the plans by which she would choose to regulate her future conduct, in the new and important duties before her; and she urged her reasons for delay with so much truth and earnestness, that Ferdinand was compelled to yield to them; and it was at length determined that the marriage should not take place sooner than the end of the month of June. It was now the middle of April; and the country became every day more lovely and exhilarating. Its budding flowers, its springing verdure, every expanding charm of renovated nature, accorded with the dawning felicity of Ferdinand and Adonia. United by the most tender and rational affection, and now accustoming themselves to consider each other in regard to that connection which was to combine their future interests, their plans, and their wishes,—the names of husband and wife were only

wanting

wanting to ratify their union, not to render their friendship more endearing or confidential.

Adonia had always contemplated the beauties of the natural world with enthusiastic delight; but they now appeared with a more vivid colouring, with a more enchanting harmony of proportion, when the eye of love irradiated them; and the full heart experienced the exquisite contentment of being responded to by a congenial soul. Benevolence had always been the favorite sentiment of Ferdinand's mind, when his powers of exercising it were limited, and his depressed hopes afforded no auxiliary to the natural temper of his heart. It was now a principle of universal love, a system of active good, inspired by the virtues of Adonia, and stimulated by her approbation. Nature had formed him the *friend* of mankind; love rendered him their *brother* and *benefactor*.—Contentment of heart and restored

stored tranquillity of mind contributed more to the Earl of Wallingford's recovery than all the aids of medicine. He experienced a calm satisfaction in the society of his children, (for they were all equally his children,) a quiet self-approbation in discharging his duty towards them, which hushed to rest every discordant passion that could irritate his complaints, or retard his recovery; and in a few weeks he was so well, though not quite free from lameness, as to be able to prepare for his journey home to Conway-castle. Unwilling to part with his son, yet feeling that to separate him from Adonia would be a sacrifice which he could not reasonably demand, he proposed, as an expedient, that the whole party at the Fort should accompany him for a time to Conway-castle. He urged this petition with so flattering an earnestness, that a refusal would hardly have been polite, had any of them felt a disposition to object: but the proposal was cheerfully agreed to by

all

all parties. Lord Arunville could start no objection on account of his health, for the Earl assured him that the air was there as salubrious as at Fort-Mervan, and almost equally impregnated by the sea; that he would have the same physician, and the same *nurse*, to attend him; and that he should enjoy the undisturbed possession of his own apartment.

Lord Arunville was at present in that painfully-dubious and undecided state of mind in which a man is *glad* to be dictated to, and hardly cares whither he is conducted. His heart declared in favor of the society he was with; his reason hinted that there might be danger in remaining near Adonia, only to witness the preparations for her union with another; but the Earl's petition settled the difference; and, if there was blame in acceding to it, Lord Wallingford was the tempter. Conway-castle was not very distant from a seat of his father's, where the family com-

commonly spent a few weeks about this season of the year, and where they were soon expected. His visiting them from thence, and his indifferent health, would excuse his not joining them in London; and, in the society of friends whose attentive kindness left no restorative untried, his recovery was as likely to be accelerated as in any other situation. These considerations satisfied his reason; for, though he felt assured that no distance of time, no change of circumstances, would ever wean his heart from Adonia, he also imagined that in all places she must equally haunt his remembrance: and that here, guarded by the presence of her intended husband from admitting the dreams of hope, or encouraging vain desires, he might enjoy the present gratification of being near her, without adding any thing to the sterile dreariness of the future. Illusive ductility of imagination! which blends the hues of truth and error; which involves the summer sky in clouds and

vapour, or bids the barren soil teem with golden fruitage; which throws a filmy net over reason, so fine that she feels it not; or binds her by such rosy fetters, that she learns to love her bondage, and even lends her aid to rivet the deceitful chains!—Lord Arunville deceived his reason as well as his heart, for he had already ceased to love Adonia; but he did not choose to acknowledge himself so much the dupe of imagination, as to have thus soon conquered a passion which he had persuaded himself could end but with his life; much less could he allow that his heart was already imperceptibly stealing towards another. But the romantic heart is never so open to receive a new impression, as while depressed by the disappointment of a former attachment. At such a period, the attentions of friendship are doubly soothing, and the voice of sympathy melts the soul to tender gratitude: but the blush of love sheds its glow upon the heart, and rekindles its vacant affections.—That

attentive friendship, that soothing sympathy, were evidently the offering of Johanna's heart to Lord Arunville. Ever sedulous to please and to amuse him; to nurse his health, or divert his mind; and too much occupied by her constant anxiety to inquire or suspect its cause; she hung about him with the fond and innocent familiarity of a sister, whose whole life and happiness are linked with those of the object of her solicitude: and, while drooping health and lost vivacity soon proclaimed to every one else the real cause of this solicitude, she alone had not discovered it; and Lord Arunville *would* not, although he felt it thrilling at his heart, and re-animating his existence!

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

He was within her soul, like fire in a secret heath; that awakes with the blast, and sends its beam abroad.

OSSIAN.

EVERY elegance and luxury, which art can devise or money procure, Conway-castle presented to welcome its new guests. The dwelling was a grand pile of Gothic architecture, the lofty turrets and massy battlements of which accorded with the venerable trees, the growth of several centuries, among which it was embosomed, and the grand expanse of

ocean which rolled before its majestic front. Within, the improved taste and luxury of modern days embellished the lofty apartments with a lighter and more refined style of ornament; and the spectator who had gazed with sublime horror on the rude grandeur of the outward fabric, and the magnificent gloom which stamped the general contour of the scene, was astonished, upon entering it, to meet every where the decorations of the airy wand of fashion, guided by the most exquisite taste; and inspiring nothing but gaiety and pleasure. The gardens and pleasure-grounds were also modern; and, meandering through the aboriginal groves of lofty forest-trees, resembled an infant Tempe, shaded by its Thessalian mountains. There stood a simple white-walled cottage, the habitation of a gardener or verderer, with a green, perhaps, or little garden before it; and ornamented, rather than shaded, by a few desultory trees, which served as a fore-

fore-ground to some romantic or deviously-extensive landscape: and there, the tall obelisk or blossomed arbour towered, half-hidden, over the neighbouring branches, or peeped through the masses of close-embowering trees, which were contrasted by the *riante* verdure of a finely-opened lawn. But there was *one* retreat, more hidden, more solemn, which attracted not the gay glance of curious admiration. In the bottom of a deep dell, which was led to by a narrow and shadowy path, strangely circuitous, lay a smooth and silent pool, whose dark bosom, over-canopied by the spreading arms of the surrounding forest, received only the partial and tremulous gleams of sunshine which now and then stole a passage through the leaves, and glanced their alternate moments upon the water.—Solitude had chosen this for her favorite abode; and here the lover of solitude found a retirement, solemnly congenial, in a kind of hermitage, situated near the

 foot

foot of the lake, the entrance to which was hidden by a bold projection of rock, and the front of the building, covered over with ivy and wild weeds, could not by a cursory glance be distinguished from among the various shades of surrounding verdure. The only sounds, that disturbed the awful stillness of this secluded spot, were those of a pebbled brook, which issued in low murmurs from the pool, and bore its waters in a narrow serpentine channel round the back of the hermitage, where, at a little distance, it was heard sobbing down a gap of rocks, with a kind of stifled sound, produced by the interference of some fallen trees that crossed its passage; and sometimes the melancholy wild-dove mingled her long and plaintive murmurs with the still symphony. It was a scene sacred to silence,—to repose,—to solemn meditation; and it was the only spot overlooked in the daily rambles of Ferdinand and Adonia, who wandered together among these varied and

romantic

romantic scenes with never-exhausted admiration and delight. Johanna, however, more solitary and curious, at length discovered the hermitage. One day, wandering alone among the woods, chance conducted her along the winding footpath. She reached the borders of the lake, and, while she stood gazing with mixed sensations of awe and delight on the rich solemnity of the scene, she was rouzed from her reverie by the sound of footsteps behind her.—On turning round, she saw a man, whom she supposed to be one of the gardeners, pursuing the path she had quitted; till, entering what seemed to her an aperture of the ivied rock, he suddenly disappeared.

Judging from this circumstance that the walk did not terminate there, curiosity induced her to follow him. She entered behind the rock; but, seeing no symptoms of habitation or farther passage, was about to return disappointed,

when she perceived some of the branches before her gently move; and, pursuing the direction her eye had taken, a door was opened in the rock by the same man; who, on seeing her, hastily entered, and closed it against her. Again she proceeded, though with more timid steps, and at length arrived within the outer apartment of this secluded retreat. It was a small octagonal cabin, lined with moss, and furnished with a table and a few rustic seats, formed of the undressed boughs of the willow, fantastically knotted together, and covered with rush-matting. On the pebbled floor lay a bundle of sticks, which seemed to have been collected for the purpose of fuel; and, beside them, a knife and a man's glove, which she concluded had been left there by the person who had so mysteriously vanished from her, for vanished she surely thought he must be! as she could discover no internal passage by which he could have retreated, and the door she had entered

tered by was the same through which he disappeared. Johanna was one of the beings who never dream of meeting aught worse than themselves; and, though surprised by the mysterious air of every thing around her, she soon reconciled herself to the strange disappearance of the man, by concluding that there was some other door, through which he might have escaped unperceived by her. After resting herself a few minutes on one of the rustic seats, she ventured to explore farther; and at length, observing a seam in the moss, she examined the wall minutely, and discovered that there was indeed another door; but it yielded not to her touch. At its top a cluster of wild weeds and thick-knotted ivy seemed to have closed it up by interweaving themselves with the clothing of the walls. A determined curiosity now impelled her to finish the *adventure* she had begun; and, stretching her arm to the top by the aid of one of the benches, she raised the shadowing

umbrage, which she found quite loose and unconnected with the door; and a tablet of white marble appeared behind it; on which, with feelings of awe, as though she had been addressed by a voice from the tomb, she read the following lines :—

Stranger ! art thou young and gay ?
Turn thee quickly, turn away !
Giddy mirth must ne'er presume
To violate this sacred gloom ;—
Nor unhallow'd thoughts intrude
Where nature reigns with solitude.

Stranger ! doth thy clouded heart
Own the traitor's, murd'rer's, part ?
Doth guilt corrode thy aching breast ?
Seek not here a place of rest !
Remorse, that sleeps 'mid revels rude,
Turns terror wild in solitude.

Stranger ! art thou sad and old ?
Spurn'd by friends or kindred cold ?
Is misfortune all thy blame ?
Enter thou, and urge thy claim
To the calm that sooths the good ;—
'Tis nourish'd here by solitude !

Here thou shalt no longer weep ;
Here doth wearied anguish sleep :

Through

Through this gloom to thee shall rise
A vista op'ning to the skies;—
The holy calm that sooths the good
Mingles heav'n with solitude!

STAVORDALE.

"And which of these characters is mine?" inquired Johanna pensively:—"Am I the young and *gay?*" A heavy and deep-drawn sigh followed the mental inquiry. It rouzed a thousand half-formed ideas, which thought combined, and imagination decorated.

Lull'd in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are link'd by many a hidden chain;
Awake but one, and, lo! what myriads rise!*

Johanna's myriads were all stamped with one image. The thousand-tinted bubbles which rise on the surface of viscous water, when agitated, and reflect the face which gazes on them through all their different sizes and hues, were not more faithful to multiply that picture. Whether gay or mournful, dark or sun-lighted,

* PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

lighted, Lord Arunville still mingled with every idea which rose upon her fancy.—She discovered that *his* was the form most prominent,—*his* the idea most cherished;—that *he* was the being most beloved! "Alas!" thought Johanna, too plainly I now find that I have loved Lord Arunville, while I imagined I only pitied him!—This dangerous destructive passion, which I thought I knew so well how to guard against, has stolen upon me even before I suspected its approach;—and he returns it not! A thousand daggers seemed to transfix her heart; burning blushes overspread her cheeks; shame, self-accusation, and the keenest anguish of unrequited affection, by turns possessed her mind.—The mysterious door,—the solemn scene,—her unfinished research,—were all forgotten; and she returned home, involved in agonizing reflections, without once again reverting to any of the circumstances which had lately so strongly interested her curiosity.

She

She did not join the family till the dinner-bell rang; and then, entering the dining-room with a down-cast face and trembling frame, she seated herself at table, as far removed from Lord Arunville as possible, with the sensations of a conscious culprit, shrinking from the penetrating eye of his judge.—She spoke not,—ate not; but, smiling when there was no cause to smile, she tried in vain to appear unconcerned; and hastily helped herself from the dish that stood nearest her, without either choice or appetite. Adonia and Ferdinand, who sat opposite to her, soon remarked these singularities; but, without suspecting any other cause than fatigue from her long ramble, the latter gaily asked her, whether she had not met an apparition in those haunted woods? She answered tremulously and simply, "No!" while the quickened blood rushed tumultuously to her cheeks. Adonia looked at her with surprise and concern, and Ferdinand ceased his inquiry, as he

now

now perceived that she was really agitated by some secret and unusual emotion. In a few minutes, however, Johanna, recollecting the quaint simplicity of her reply, and terrified at the thoughts of betraying her disorder to so many watchful friends, rallied her spirits, and renewed the subject. "I did indeed meet an apparition in my walks," said she; "but it was not a disembodied one."—And she related her discovery of the hermitage, and the strange disappearance of the man she had seen there; concluding by inquiring whether it was inhabited? "You astonish me!" said Lord Wallingford. "I know of no such place upon my grounds, much less of any inhabitant it can have; and yet it is impossible you could have wandered far enough to get beyond my boundaries.—Bates!" said he, addressing the old butler, "do you know this hermitage?"—"Yes, my Lord: it was made by my Lord Stavordale, when he retired here after the death of Lady Frances.—

He

He chose it to be perfectly sequestered, and appropriated to himself; and therefore desired it should remain a secret, except to the few who were employed in erecting it.—I was entrusted with his directions concerning it, and superintended the workmen. The tablet, which Miss Fitzwilliam describes, was placed there by my Lord himself; but it was not then hidden from sight.—I have not visited it for several years, and suppose time may have made many alterations.—Even when I knew it, it was difficult of access; and the inner apartments could not be penetrated but by those who were well acquainted with its secret windings. There are many other poetical inscriptions besides that Miss Fitzwilliam mentions; and in this place my Lord Stavordale spent many a solitary day, lamenting Lady Frances." "It was a strange effect of grief!" said the Earl pensively. "But who can be the man then who has discovered, and seems to have taken

possession

possession of, this gloomy dwelling?" Bates hesitated:—"I know not, indeed, who he is,—who he can be.—Perhaps only some accidental intruder, who had been gathering fuel in the woods.—No one would venture to inhabit there without leave; and, indeed, it is not a place that any man would choose even to take a temporary shelter in. It is gloomy and wild enough to drive one distracted."

"Well, Bates," said Lord Wallingford, "let it remain a secret till I am able to visit it myself. And observe!" said he sternly to the other servants, "that I expect none of you will disobey my orders!"

An excursion was fixed upon for next day, to visit the antiquities of Christ-Church; and, as this had been some time in agitation, the hermitage was forgotten. The weather proved favorable to their design, and they set out, Ferdinand driving Adonia in a phaeton;

and

and Admiral Tracey, Johanna, Fanny Tracey, and Madame Brumelle, in an uncovered landau.—The Earl's state of health would not permit him to accompany them; and Lord Arunville, equally languid, remained behind. After having visited all that is usually pointed out to the notice of the curious in the monastic ruins and other antiquities of Christ-Church, and wandered some time among the romantic scenery of the country around, they returned to the inn where they had left their equipage, and sat down to some refreshment, which it must be owned was none of the best. It was a dirty ill-attended inn, situated in a gloomy street, and afforded none but the commonest fare, though it was allowed to be the only inn of *any note* in the town.—Tired of their comfortless shelter, they had ordered the carriages, and were preparing to return home, when one of the servants brought in a written petition for charity; which, he said, had been given him at the

the door by a poor young woman, who seemed to be in great distress. Admiral Tracey was the first to take it, and the first to exclaim against the frequency and imposition of such demands: when, glancing his eye over the paper, he read, that the petitioner was a poor French woman, who was endeavouring to beg her way back to her native country, being unable from circumstances of peculiar distress to procure the means of subsistence by labour. Several respectable names were signed to the different contributions which appeared to have been made for her. "Well, I suppose, we must add something to it," said he, handing round the paper; "though I believe, from my soul, she is no more a Frenchwoman than I am!—but there is nothing so instrumental to the purposes of these travelling vagrants as the name of *foreigner*." It was however a special passport to Adonia's heart; and, with more sympathy than prudence, she subscribed two guineas.

The

The Admiral loudly censured this extravagance, and declared that *he* meant to give no more than a few shillings, "which was quite enough, and indeed too much, to bestow on any casual mendicant whom they knew nothing of." But Adonia persisted, and the rest of the company put down their donations and their names.—"Now," said Admiral Tracey, "I will carry it to her myself, and see whether her appearance corresponds with her piteous tale." He returned in a few minutes with a face expressive of the most benevolent sympathy; and informed them, that the poor woman was indeed very ill. She had fainted the moment he returned the paper to her, and the people of the house were now endeavouring to restore her; but she shewed no signs of life, and he had ordered a surgeon to be called in. —Moved by the tenderest compassion, the young ladies immediately insisted on visiting her themselves; and, entering the apartment

where

where she lay extended on a comfortless stock-bed, Adonia and Johanna instantly recognized, amid all her rags and wretchedness, the beautiful features and elegant form of their lost Annette! Distress and pleasure were so closely united in the discovery, that it was impossible to say which predominated! The joy of finding her again was allayed by the melancholy circumstances in which they saw her; and this distress was again softened by the pleasing reflection that their interesting *paysanne* was once more restored to their protection, and surrounded by none but friends.

A long interval elapsed before Annette was sensible to their tenderness. At length, with her eyes still closed, she vehemently exclaimed, " Where are they! Oh! lead me to them! Mademoiselle de Rosier will not let me die!" " We are here, dear Annette!" exclaimed both the agitated girls at once, each taking one of her cold

and

and trembling hands. She looked up, raised their hands to her lips, and again fainted. Proper applications soon restored her. She was let blood, and carried to a better apartment, where a nurse was provided to attend her, and the people of the house received liberal earnest of what would be the reward of treating her with tenderness and attention. She was so weak and exhausted, that it was impossible to remove her at present; and her kind friends were obliged to leave her to the care of the landlady, who seemed a benevolent motherly woman, and promised faithfully to nurse her with tenderness.

This incident employed all their conversation during their ride home; and, on their arrival at Conway-castle, Ferdinand had the pleasure of communicating happiness to his faithful Hubert, by informing him that Annette was found! The wildest transport lighted up the desponding features of Hubert.—He wept, laughed,

laughed, and capered about, by turns; till Ferdinand, affecting to be offended by his want of decorum, told him to go about his business, or carry his transports to Annette. "Alas!" cried Hubert, sinking in a moment from his state of visionary rapture, "Annette cares not for me!" You may go and try her, at least," said Ferdinand. "It will surely give her pleasure to see an old friend, though she may not wish to find a lover; but fear not, Hubert; a woman's heart is not to be gained at once: I think thou art worthy of Annette, were she the prettiest *paysanne* that France ever nursed." "She is the loveliest girl and the best," cried Hubert, "that ever man gazed on!" and, after a moment or two of pretended prudence and hesitation, he accepted Ferdinand's permission; and, eagerly mounting his horse, galloped off for Christ-Church. Annette was indeed rejoiced to see him, though she could only weep her welcome: but Hubert soon found

found that misfortune had endeared to her every thing connected with home; and that the hardships she had endured in her unprotected wanderings had peculiarly softened her heart towards her long-rejected lover. She, indeed, had half determined to reward his constancy the moment she saw him enter.—Her heart stood in need of tenderness, and her worn spirits reposed on the idea of being still beloved, as on a consolatory blessing which it would be folly to turn away from. Exulting in conscious beauty, and happy in her home, she had formerly felt no desire to change her situation; and her irresolution was fed by the numerous crowd of her rustic flatterers, who persuaded her that all the world was in her choice. But she had been humbled by the most disgraceful proposals, where she expected nothing less than an honorable connection with her gay seducer: her eyes had been opened to his real worthlessness; and, in escaping from him, she

had been exposed to every hardship and insult that could exemplify the folly of her vain expectations, and teach her the value of humbler possessions. Hubert was still fondly attached to her, and still anxiously solicitous to obtain her hand. He informed her of his good fortune, in being the favorite servant of the best of masters; that Lord Stavordale was soon to be united to Mademoiselle de Rosier; and that by marrying him she would still have it in her power to remain with her friend and benefactress. Annette felt all the comfort of such a protector as Hubert, all the blessings of such a home.—The affair was soon concluded:—she promised to be his wife; and Hubert thought himself as happy a man as Lord Stavordale himself.

In a few days Annette was well enough to be brought to Conway-castle; and, in a few more, her beauty and animation were almost perfectly restored; and created

ated many a rival for Hubert among his fellow-servants, who, he feared, would again bewilder her heart, and undermine her choice: but Annette was now too well schooled by misfortune, and too sensible of Hubert's worth, to play the tyrant again; and, disgusted and alarmed by their importunities, she spent most of her time in the apartment of her lady, Mademoiselle Adonia, and in attending the solitary rambles of Miss Fitzwilliam, who now joined as little as possible with the family-circle; where her timid eyes could see only Lord Arunville, and where her conscious heart trembled every moment with the dread of betraying itself.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,
It would have madded me!

SHAKSPEARE.

THE anxiety on Annette's account, which had superseded Johanna's wish of revisiting the hermitage, was now ended by her perfect recovery; but, from the nature and manner of Lord Wallingford's prohibition in regard to it, she judged it proper to ask his permission before she ventured to proceed. At breakfast, therefore, one morning, while the servants were

were absent, she took an opportunity of inquiring, whether she might be allowed to consider herself exempted from this general order? The Earl paused and hesitated ere he granted her request.—At length he said, "You are so well acquainted, Miss Fitzwilliam, with my unhappy son's story, that there can be nothing there which need shock or surprise you.—I could have wished to be myself the first to explore this solemn retirement; but, as my enfeebled state does not promise an early renewal of sufficient strength for undertaking so long a walk, I believe I may delegate the trust to you. You will, I know, spare a father's feelings, should you find there any sad circumstances to embitter a father's regret!" "May *I* not be permitted to accompany my cousin?" said Adonia softly. "And I," said Ferdinand; "you will not surely exclude me?" Lord Arunville now ventured to add his petition; and after some hesitation, which arose from certain humilia-

ting reflections not easily avowed, Lord Wallingford gave his consent. Fanny Tracey was silenced by a look from her father, who did not wish her to intrude where the Earl seemed already to think there were too many intruders; and the party was confined to the four who had first solicited permission.

They set out, gay and curious.—The day was uncommonly fine, and every step presented them with some new and graceful attitude of nature, clothed in the gayest drapery of spring. Bates followed by his Lord's orders, to conduct them through the interior recesses of the hermitage; but he followed reluctantly; for he had a benevolent secret deposited there, which he anxiously wished to conceal from them, doubtful of their approbation of the part he had taken in it. They reached the romantic borders of the lake; and, lost in feelings of awe and delight, gazed on it during some moments of entranced silence.

lence. "What a scene!" said Ferdinand at length, looking on Adonia with all the devotion which he felt. "What a scene to inspire the mind, and lift it above this changeful world! We will retire hither, my love, to learn moderation when we become intoxicated with our sublunary happiness. When I feel Adonia weaning my thoughts from heaven, I will come hither to steal a look upwards, and be reminded that there is a God to be adored, as well as an Adonia to be loved." "Hush, profane Ferdinand!" said Adonia, with a countenance that glowed with a sweet severity: "It is an offensive and distorted adulation, that would dare to unite a mortal's with that hallowed name! Ferdinand feels not what he utters, or I should blush for him!"

They now hastened after Johanna and Lord Arunville, who were proceeding towards the hermitage, gaily threatening to out-trip them.—They entered the outer

 apartment,

apartment, which has already been described; and were surprised to observe with what ease Bates discovered and opened the hidden door; but they were still more astonished, when they saw him rush hastily past them into the inner apartment; and heard the sound of other footsteps retreating, which echoed through the vaulted roof with reverberated and prolonged sounds. "It is my positive belief," cried Johanna, "that he has discovered a den of robbers; and we shall be shabby creatures if we allow them to escape from such a party as *we!*—Come on, Ferdinand! and let us assist the poor man in his office of thief-catcher!" She tripped forwards, and they all followed her through a dark and narrow passage into an apartment nearly similar to that they had quitted;—but no Bates was to be seen, nor any farther entrance! There was a kind of sofa in this room large enough to form a bed; and it was evident that it had lately been occupied as such.—On the table

table lay some writing materials; and on a low stool, in one of the ivied windows, they found a man's hat; on the inner lining of which were the initials A. G. "Some other of the Grybton family, I suppose," said Lord Arunville, smiling pensively, "finds this a congenial solitude as well as I.—But what have we here!—another admonitory tablet?" A new curiosity now silenced their conjectures on the mysterious absence of Bates, and they all crowded to the window; above which, graven on a tablet similar to the one Johanna had before seen, they read—

TO THE MEMORY OF

AGNES STANHOPE.

AGNES, my first sweet love!
Thou fairest child of young Simplicity,
Peace to thy ashes pure! The verse, that would
Commemorate thy charms, must, like thyself,
Be unembellish'd, save by Truth and Nature:
For Grief is but a simple eulogist;
Who, when he seeks to tell his tale of woe,
In silence shakes the head, and waves the hand;
And then bursts out afresh in bitt'rer tears:
Taught by *that moment's* throes, that mourning love

Could never yet find energy to paint
The vast enchantment of the charmer lost !—
Suffice to say——
This stone was rais'd to tell,
That Agnes was a young and gentle maid;
Twin'd round the heart of love by ev'ry tie
Of modest worth, of answ'ring love, of hope,
And chasten'd bliss,—such bliss as angels know,
Harping their raptur'd symphonies beneath
The radiant sun-beams of th' Eternal's smile!
As holy was the flame she rais'd, and shar'd;
As holy was her life, and pure her thoughts,
As tho' no mortal sense was ever blent
With the ethereal spirit!
This sweet flow'r,
This unsunn'd snowdrop, whose slight stem bow'd to
Each hastier breeze, was singled out to bide
The rudest blast that e'er Misfortune blew!
A murd'rer snapp'd her stem!—but, stranger still!—
That murd'rer was—her lover!
Never more
Shall Hope spring with the morning-light
To greet *his* breast, jocund and free!—
Remorse shall meet and sting his *waking thought*;
And each woe-clouded day to him go down
Like the dark sun-set of a fading world!

STAVORDALE.

The opposite window presented a corresponding inscription, and was inscribed

TO

TO THE MEMORY OF

LADY FRANCES S.—

AH! shall the Muse give all her strains to *one*,
And no memorial leave, Frances! to tell
Of thee?——
Oh! not the down that hung on Hebe's cheek,
The form of Juno, or th' enchanting smile
That curv'd the lip of Cytherea's queen,
Were aught, (tho' these were thine,) to the full soul
That o'er thy lesser charms shed grace divine!
That eye,—which rolls no more its sapphire orb,
Sparkling with life, and intellect, and love,—
Beam'd but a borrow'd radiance; by the mind
Illum'd, that gave to beauty eloquence:—
Thy lip, now pale and cold, sent such a swift
Persuasive smile of gay benevolence
And happy heart to wake the drowsy sense,
That ev'n could solemn Woe resist it not,
But own'd thy magic with an answ'ring smile!—
That moul'dring heart, the food of rav'ning death,
Was once of pity and of love the throne!
Of spendthrift-love, that gave its all to cheer
One bankrupt-heart,—torpid to peace and joy;—
And melting pity, that forgot itself
In soothing others' woes;—till, by too kind
And generous excess, exhausted quite,
The o'er-wrought life-chords burst!
Frances! the last, last, dear, illusion,
That o'er smother'd an uish spread a mellowing veil,
Parted with thee! The dull and sterile world
Became a second waste,—a double wreck.

Of hope, of peace, of murder'd happiness,
To me,—myself the murderer!
Thy grave
All of my love from Agnes that was left
Contains; and more of gratitude hangs o'er
Thy memory, than ever starving wretch
Gave to the hand that stay'd his ebbing life!—
Thou shalt not want the tears of fervent grief,—
For gratitude gives grief its loftiest strain;
And death, the true historian, to record
Thy excellence,—transcendent and sublime,—
Tells what thou wert to every throbbing vein!—
The parted sun on ocean's bosom sheds
His loveliest hues;—the faded rose doth
Legacy the earth with its most sweet perfume;—
And virtue leaves imperishable fame!—
But vain fantastic anguish, cease thy moan!
What Frances was, thou need'st not seek to tell,
When circling angels pay her with their smiles!

STAVORDALE.

These plaintive records of a father's sorrow beguiled Ferdinand of many filial tears; while a mournful gloom hung over every countenance, and pervaded every heart, which the entrance of Bates was not calculated to dispel; when, suddenly opening a door hitherto unperceived, he appeared before them with a countenance not

not less dejected, and an air of guilt-like embarrassment, which kept them silent through surprise.—At length, he himself spoke.—"My absence must have appeared strange, my Lord," said he, addressing Ferdinand; but, before I account for it, I must throw myself on your mercy, by acknowledging that I indeed opened these walls to receive the wretched fugitives who now inhabit here. About a fortnight ago, a miserable old man came to the door, and I, as it happened, was the first whom he accosted. He told me that he was the servant of a gentleman of rank; that he had been driven from his native place with his master, who was insane through the effect of misfortunes which it was not proper for him to reveal. His master's was only a temporary insanity, however; occasioned by some peculiar hardships which had borne heavy upon him; and he had recovered from it a short time after they found themselves in a place of safety. But the dread-

ful gloom that hung upon his spirits constantly threatened him with a return of this malady, and he was grown so feeble and childish, that he suffered himself to be led about by his servant, without even offering to direct his course.—They travelled into Hampshire, and one night found shelter in the outer room of the hermitage. Perceiving by the extent of the building, that it contained other apartments; and, seeing it entirely untenanted, the man conceived a hope, as he knew his master desired to remain concealed, that it might be converted into a comfortable habitation, if he could but penetrate its recesses; but this he was unable to effect; and, after remaining there a day and a night, till the food they brought with them was quite exhausted, his master, for the first time, seemed to interest himself in his own fate, by expressing an earnest wish to secure this place as his dwelling; and directed him to explore the path that led from it, and

see

see what house or village was at hand.—The winding foot-path which he followed brought him to the Castle; and, meeting me, he inquired to whom the hermitage belonged; then, relating the story I have given you, entreated that they might be permitted to remain there, at least till his master was somewhat more settled in his mind.—Though his story was ambiguous, there was something so honest and open in his manner, that I could not find in my heart to refuse; and I told him, that, as it was a retreat unknown to any of the family but myself, they might safely venture to occupy it as long as they chose. I offered to refer him to my Lord, who, I thought, would cheerfully relieve their necessities; but he told me that they did not want for money; and, only seeking privacy, he entreated that I would not expose their retreat to any one.—I then instructed him how to find entrance to the inner rooms; and he left me, gratefully accepting some broken victuals which

I offered

I offered him, and again repeating his charges of secrecy. I had another visit some days afterwards from him; but the particulars of his second conversation I must not disclose.—Fearing that you would discover these unhappy men, who are so eager for concealment, I went before to apprize them of your approach; and found the sick gentleman returned to his former wanderings. He raved and laughed by turns; and at length, throwing himself on the ground with violence, he received a dreadful blow, which stunned him for a few moments; but, on our raising him, he seemed more collected; and, after thanking us, laid himself down, and sobbed like a child." "Let us go to him instantly!" cried Ferdinand:—"he has nothing to fear from us; and misery like this excuses all forms of ceremony.—But, my Adonia, it is not a spectacle for you! The ladies will have the goodness to remain here, while Arunville and I visit the poor stranger."

It was in vain that Bates would have opposed their design. With a commanding voice, Ferdinand insisted on his leading the way; and Johanna and Adonia followed, in spite of their remonstrances. After going through various intricate turnings, they entered a low and narrow cell, which seemed like some dreary mansion of the dead. By the door stood the old servant, who shrunk retreating from their view; and kneeling before a small altar, with his face covered by his hands, they perceived the unfortunate stranger. He was so lost in his devotions, that he seemed unconscious of their presence; and they surveyed him for some minutes in respectful silence. It was a figure which commanded respect:—the most noble symmetry of form received additional grace from his kneeling posture; and the dignified air which he gave to misery mingled veneration with sympathy.—He slowly rose;—he looked wildly around; his eyes met Adonia's, and his arms instantly

stantly enfolded her!—Glowing pencil of prolific fancy! thou canst not paint this blissful moment!—The stranger was her *father!*—Adonia fainted beneath the overwhelming rapture; but placid happiness lingered on her features, and she soon raised again her eyes, and rushed into his arms!—He strained her close to his bosom; he pressed her cheeks, her lips, her eyes;—but still he spoke not; and rapture had closed up the source of tears. Adonia now wept copiously; but De Bellefonde only gazed upon her with fixed and wide-distended eyes, that seemed fearful of losing any part of the dear object on whom they rested. Adonia, now trembling for his intellects, strove to rouze him to tears. "My father!" said she, fondly kissing him, "methinks you meet your Adonia with but a cold and heartless welcome to that which fills her bosom!—You do not weep!—Is then your heart steeled against your child? Speak to me, father! Oh! speak or weep! and shew that

that I am still beloved!" He pushed her gently from him; and, with the piercing smile of madness, rendered dreadfully beautiful by the finely-formed features over which it wildly played, and the full-orbed eye that shot its tremulous glare full upon her shrinking countenance, he said, "Syren! thou art not Adonia!—Her soul was winged to heaven a thousand years ago! I have seen her there!—It is now a long, long, year since I had a daughter too,—another Adonia! Hush! do not inquire *her* fate!" "Gracious God!" cried Adonia, wringing her hands, and bursting into an agony of tears, "who can bear this!" "Did your daughter die?" cried Ferdinand, with glowing eagerness,—striving to awaken his memory or his tenderness:—"Was she murdered?" De Bellefonde answered not; but, clasping his forehead, complained that some one had stabbed him there!—"Who, who, stabbed you?" cried Ferdinand.—"But now I remember," returned De

De Bellefonde; "it was myself! How foolish to forget!—But, if you have ever been unhappy, sir, you will know that one has strange wanderings at times. It was but this morning, as I walked among the woods, that I saw the spirit of Adonia standing near the lake; but that boy St. Loudon was with her, and he looked all the treachery of his friend De l'Avignon. I would have drawn my sword upon him, but somebody pulled me away; and then I found it was all a dream. Is it not strange that one should dream? Dreams are but made of floating down; I have often tried to catch them, but they always fled me." "It was no dream, my father!" cried Adonia, sobbing; "it was all reality: I am the Adonia whom you saw,—your own Adonia!"—"Thou art not indeed unlike my daughter!" said he, walking round, and surveying her curiously; "but no, no! *her* cheek was clothed in smiles; her eyes were radiant and tearless as the morning-sun, when he

he comes to dry the dews of night. She never shed a tear, but many, many, did she wipe away! She cheered my soul, and kept me prisoner on earth!" "Oh! that I could cheer thee now!" cried Adonia, clasping her hands in agony. Lord Arunville, who was not the least agitated spectator of this Interesting scene, now advised them to leave him; for that their presence rendered his mind more unsettled; and, when left alone, he might perhaps collect his thoughts: they therefore moved to follow his adviee, but De Bellefonde as quickly pursued them:—"Perhaps the dear sufferer will accompany us to the house?" said Johanna; who, at all times silent and timid, had hitherto remained almost stupified by horror: "Let us encourage him to follow us!" She reached out her hand to him; but he dashed it away with violence, and still hurried on. He walked with them till they came to the borders of the lake, and then, stopping and gazing on it with a mourn-

a mournful and more steady eye, he said, shaking his head, "Ah! it would make a deep, deep, grave, which nobody would discover! but there is no place for the suicide in heaven!—I attempted it once," continued he, drawing close to Lord Arunville, and whispering;—"but the stroke was not mortal, and I will not repeat it. Gervois," said he, calling to his servant, "lay my pillow here;—I am sadly tired:" and sinking on the turf, like a child quite exhausted, he almost immediately dropped asleep. They gently raised him, and Adonia supported his head on her lap; while they spread their shawls under him, to defend him from the damp.

In this situation he remained some time, apparently wrapped in a calm and refreshing slumber; and they flattered themselves, that, as his wanderings were but temporary, he would awake to reason. In this case, as the sudden sight of

of his daughter might again overpower him, with much reluctance she consented to retire to some distance, among the trees, until they should see the effect of his sleep. Their hopes were answered.—He awoke greatly enlightened; and, soon recognizing Ferdinand, he asked him sternly what had brought him to England, and whether the Comte was come with him to follow up his schemes of perfidy? Lord Arunville briefly explained to him the change in Ferdinand's circumstances;—that he was now Lord Stavordale, the acknowledged grandson and heir of the Earl of Wallingford;—that he had always detested De l'Avignon's villany, and was now for ever parted from him. "I believe it!" said De Bellefonde; "St. Loudon's was not a nature which could long hold union with a villain! But can you tell me any thing of my friends, my scattered family?" inquired he eagerly:—"Surely I folded Adonia to my bosom lately! and yet so often have I waked and found these blissful

blissful fancies visionary, that I dare not believe it! Tell me quickly, did I really see my daughter?" "Be calm, then," said Lord Arunville, "and I will tell you happy tidings." "I will be calm!" replied De Bellefonde, struggling with his feelings:—"It is surprise only that can overpower me; and now I know the truth!—I have found my child!—Nature did not deceive me, even in the gripe of madness:—my poor faded Adonia is still in being;—O my angel-child!"

Tears now streamed in torrents over his cheeks; and, revived by this salutary relief, he became calm and settled. Ferdinand flew to seek Adonia.—It was a reunion which will not bear the mockery of description!

CHAP. XLII.

AIDED by the best medical advice, and tranquillized by the happiness of seeing his daughter restored to him, more beautiful, more affectionate, than ever, the Marquis de Bellefonde gradually recovered his mental as well as bodily health. He had owed his life and safety to the fidelity of the good old man who attended him;—and the manner of his escape from prison entirely exempted him from what he would have considered ignominious and dishonorable in flying from the sentence of

of his country. With the same mystery and cruelty that had attended all the measures of the secret faction which operated against him, when it was discovered that the wounds he had given himself were not mortal, he was conveyed to another prison, more noisome and gloomy than the first, and guarded with g eater severity. The report which prevailed of his death was not contradicted; and his friends were all kept in profound ignorance of his real fate. This last prison was crowded with wretches of every description, who, like him, were under sentence of death;—and the dreadful scenes to which he was a daily witness soon entirely deranged his reason, already greatly weakened by his previous sufferings. What fate he was reserved for it was not easy to conjecture: for, though it would have seemed by his removal, and the secrecy which was observed in regard to it, that his enemies designed the completion of his sentence, he

he was suffered to linger on in alternate madness and misery for many months; while every day one or other of the wretched victims around him was carried out to death. But De Bellefonde's life had been remarkable; and it seemed as if a peculiar guardianship was commissioned to attend him to its destined completion. An execution at length took place which peculiarly exasperated the mob who were assembled to witness it, and a dreadful tumult and slaughter arose, which ended in the prison being utterly demolished, and all its wretched surviving inhabitants emancipated. De Bellefonde followed the crowd unconsciously; and his altered appearance would alone have been sufficient to conceal him from observation, had not also the general confusion rendered the people inattentive to individuals. He was soon, however, pursued; and, in crossing a retired street, he saw at a distance De l'Avignon himself; from whom, shrinking with a sort of in-

stinctive horror, he rushed into the nearest house, just at the moment when his faithful hoary-headed servant, Gervois, came up with him. He had, unknown to De Bellefonde, been confined in the same prison from which he had been so unexpectedly released; and was now seeking his unfortunate master. It proved to be the house of a friend; and Gervois easily found a temporary concealment for him, while he himself ventured forth to inquire the fate of his own family, and to gain some tidings respecting that of De Bellefonde. After a few hours' absence, he returned, exhausted and spiritless; having learned that his two sons had joined a regiment on the frontiers of Germany, and that his old wife was no more.—Inquiring for the scattered family of the Marquis, he had also been informed of the death of the Marchioness d'Estreaux and Adonia's flight; and, knowing that flight could alone preserve his master, he imparted to him his wish of emigrating to some

some other country; imploring him to pursue the same course, and permit him to accompany him.

De Bellefonde, bewildered and desponding, heard without fully comprehending him. He listened unmoved to the tidings of the Marchioness's death; and heard, with equal apathy, that his Adonia, his darling child, was gone no one knew whither. He spoke something incoherently of delivering himself up to the King; and said that it was disgraceful for a man to evade the sentence of the law; but it was evident that these were only the ravings of disordered reason; and Gervois pursued his plan without opposition. He had a small sum of money in the hands of a private banker, a friend on whom he could rely, which he found means to draw without being discovered. No hope of pecuniary advantage to himself could tempt him to risk De Bellefonde's safety, by making known his si-

tuation to the Marquis d'Estreaux, or any of his supposed friends; but, with the most vigilant fidelity, he supplied his necessities, and guarded him from every danger, until he landed him in perfect security in England,—that haven to which he saw so many of his wretched countrymen fly with confidence for protection. Here, in a quiet retirement at Dover, and with the best medical attendance which Gervois's limited means could procure for him, De Bellefonde's reason was temporarily restored.—His first impulse of enlightened mind was like most of his former projects, lofty and romantic. He spurned at the idea of continuing an outlawed fugitive from his country, and wished to return immediately, to resign himself to his sentence; but the reasonings and entreaties of Gervois at length dissuaded him. He represented to him, that, by the laws of truth and reason, that sentence had been unjust; that he had twice been miraculously saved from death;

and

and that it would be impious to dare the will of heaven, by ungratefully frustrating those singular interpositions of Providence which had been so strikingly manifested in his preservation.—He told him to remember, that the guilt of suicide was upon him; "And would he dare to appear with this unexpiated in the presence of an offended God, when restored reason was permitted him, to consider and repent his crime?" He reminded him that his return to France must expose the miseries he had undergone, and the deception which had been practised on his friends by the report of his death; and might consequently irritate them to embroil themselves in some impotent struggle against a faction which carried every thing before it. "And who are my friends?" inquired De Bellefonde, with gloomy wildness: "Was there one arm raised to shield me from injustice, when I underwent the ignominy of a public trial? One voice heard amid the yell of persecution, to urge its simple

simple testimony, that De Bellefonde was unworthy of his punishment? But, Gervois, I am convinced! I will not court the death which has twice been warded from me with such peculiar care. *Wilfully* I would not have fled; but thy generous fidelity shall not be frustrated. I have indeed a long account to settle with heaven; and I will employ the remnant of a miserable existence in atoning for my daring rebellion against its will." He then sunk into a gloomy calm, which sought not consolation, which shunned all society.—At length he became anxious to learn whether Mrs. Fitzwilliam was still alive, the sister of his ever-lamented wife; and, recollecting that she had resided in Hampshire, he expressed a wish to go thither. They set out in the humble style of travelling suited to their finances; De Bellefonde studiously concealing his name, and every trace of his former condition, from the romantic pride which still annexed disgrace to his emigration.

gration. Arriving at Lyndhurst, they learned that Mr. and Mrs. Fitzwilliam were both dead; and found that they had nearly exhausted the remnant of their slender provision by a fruitless journey.—It happened that Gervois had in his youth attended an English gentleman on his travels, and had returned with him to England, where he resided three years. The knowledge he had then gained of the language was not entirely lost; and De Bellefonde, perfectly master of it, took pains to revive it in him; so that, although his accent discovered the country he came from, he could make himself sufficiently understood to continue his office of being the conductor of their wanderings; and he now went about in search of some cheap cottage where they might fix a temporary residence. In the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst, where they halted, he could fine none that united cheapness with comfort; and they set out on foot towards that part of the

 country

country which belonged to the Earl of Wallingford, always avoiding the most frequented roads. They were overtaken by night, on the borders of the wood surrounding Conway-castle; and here De Bellefonde declared himself so wearied, that he could proceed no farther. Gervois then penetrated the wood; which, from the appearance of art and polish correcting the wild exuberances of nature, must, he saw, belong to some person of fortune and taste: he therefore hoped to discover some accessible building among the elegant grounds which he now entered, where his unfortunate master might find shelter for the night.

He had entered from the side where the hermitage was most exposed, and chance conducted him to its entrance. Its retirement, its shelter, and the mossy couch which he found in the outer apartment, determined him to fix there; and he returned to his master, and conducted him,

him, by slow and painful steps, to this secluded and deserted dwelling. Next morning De Bellefonde was so ill from fatigue, that he could not bear removal; and, on the following day, finding that their food was exhausted, he directed Gervois to proceed in search of some house or village where he might procure a supply; expressing at the same time an earnest wish, that such a place as this might be his future abode. The direction which Gervois chose brought him near the castle; and he determined to inquire to whom the place belonged; and whether his master might not be permitted to purchase or retain the hermitage? The compassion of Bates, whom he accosted, was moved by his venerable figure and piteous story; which, though disjointed and ambiguous, was related with an air of sincerity and real distress, that at once silenced every thing but compassion. Bates gave him the keys of the inner apartments, and instructed him how to

find their hidden entrance; only conditioning, that he should conceal from every one the place of their abode, which was at present a retreat unknown to its possessors; and he farther informed him where to find the nearest village, at which they might be supplied with future necessaries. Gervois at his return informed De Bellefonde that the domains they were upon belonged to the Earl of Wallingford; this discovery revived all the distressing memory of former days in the bosom of the unfortunate Marquis. "Perhaps these were the very scenes which had given birth to his wife; to his first Adonia!" and remembering how she had been deserted by her father's family, and how probable it was that the present Earl was acquainted with the particulars of her fate,—now so generally divulged in France,—he became impatient to depart from a place whose vicinity to the only family in England whom he had cause to hate or fear rendered it painful to him to remain.

remain. But he was now too ill to attempt travelling on foot without imminent danger; and no carriage could come within two miles of the spot, even if it had been convenient to procure one. Gervois endeavoured to calm his mind, by assuring him of the improbability of Lord Wallingford's discovering this retreat; and that, even if found, it was impossible that he could know *him*.—But the unfortunate De Bellefonde was not to be reasoned into calmness; for his brain was now again on fire. He annexed horror to the idea of meeting Lord Wallingford, and an insurmountable repugnance to being known to him, which filled his mind with a thousand chimeras; hence Gervois was reduced to the necessity of detaining him by force. In order, however, to secure him more certainly against that discovery which Gervois now conceived must be of greater danger than he had before imagined, some days afterwards he confined his unhappy

happy master in an inner apartment of the hermitage, whence he could not possibly escape; and returned to the castle, to renew his charges of secrecy to his friend Bates, and consult with him on the means of removing the Marquis.—He hinted to him De Bellefonde's connection with the Earl; and conjured him, if ever they should be discovered, to conceal, if possible, that they were Frenchmen. Bates convinced him that they had no interruption to apprehend; and humanely supplied him with some medicines for his master; directing him how they were to be used. Gervois, on his return to the hermitage, found that De Bellefonde, exhausted by his ravings and fruitless efforts to escape, had fallen into a profound sleep, which usually tranquillized him; and in a few days he had the satisfaction of seeing his intellects again restored.—The conviction which Gervois imparted to him, of his safety from being discovered, reconciled him to a situation

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in all other respects perfectly suited to his wishes; and he consented to remain there, at least until his health should be better re-established. His mind gradually recovered its firmness, and his heart its composure; till that eventful morning, when, wandering amongst the woods, he saw and recognized Adonia and St. Loudon among the party who stood by the borders of the lake. His ideas became immediately disordered: he fancied they were spirits come to haunt his retirement; and he contemplated them at a distance with awe and wonder, irresolute whether to approach them or retire; when, just as he had determined to rush towards them, Gervois, perceiving the strangers, forcibly dragged his master away, without having observed Mademoiselle de Rosier among the group whose intrusion he dreaded. The blissful meeting that ensued again overturned his mind, on which some faint gleams of remembrance and perception had

had afforded him just light enough to recognize his daughter, when she sprung to his embrace. But reason was now secured on her throne. Despair was supplanted by happiness. The dreaded Earl of Wallingford proved a kind and hospitable friend; and, in the soft caresses of his beautiful and amiable daughter, De Bellefonde scarcely remembered that he had ever been wretched.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

Eve à son jeune époux abandonna sa main,
Et rougit comme l'Aube aux portes du matin:—
O bonheur ineffable! O fortuné époux!

ABBE LILLE.

WINGED by delight, the days swiftly passed; which brought about the nuptial morning of two tender and amiable lovers in Ferdinand and Adonia. De Bellefonde's blessing attended their union. He saw and acknowledged the worth of Lord Stavordale, and the brilliancy of his daughter's happiness, in being united to a man whose rich endowments of mind and manners were only transcended by the excellence

lence of his principles, and the benevolence of his heart; and whose rank and fortune placed her in a station that afforded ample scope for the exercise of their mutual virtues. Nor were Ferdinand and Adonia the *only* pair who hailed this morning as the commencement of their wedded happiness. The beautiful Annette, who attended her mistress's toilette, was, in her turn, assisted by Adonia in arranging her simpler bridal ornaments; and when De Bellefonde presented his daughter's hand to Lord Stavordale, Gervois, invested with the distinction of acting the part of father to Annette, presented her to the faithful Hubert; and Gervois owned it was hard to say which of the brides was handsomest! Immediately after the ceremony, Lord and Lady Stavordale, accompanied by Mr. Stanhope and Miss Tracey, set off on a tour to the Northern Lakes, where scenes such as inspired the sublime genius of Poussin, or glowed beneath the perpetuating touch of Claude Lorraine,

Lorraine, presented their enchanting variety of summer-clad beauties; as if responsive to the gay delight that illumined the bosoms of the happy travellers. Wherever they went, they carried with them the desire of diffusing the happiness which they possessed. Whenever they departed, some act of a benevolence that could not rest unemployed, some distinguishing feature of kindness or urbanity, detained their fame.—

"Acceptance is the heav'n that mortals know;
But 'tis the bliss of angels to bestow!"

said Fanny Tracey, with more gaiety than feeling, as at the door of an inn at Boness, on the borders of the Lake Windermere, Adonia stooped down to kiss a little rosy-faced child, whose mother was invoking blessings to reward her goodness. The glow of delight, inspired by having dried the tears of misery, and by the fond admiration of Ferdinand, who, gazing on her in the attitude of caressing

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the child, saw her more lovely than she had ever seemed before, was however soon lost. Sorrow had still some drops to mingle with Adonia's cup. Inquiring what company had lately visited the Lake, Miss Tracey was informed by the communicative landlady, that the young Duke of F. was now on the island they were just going to visit; accompanied by a frail fair one, of the most exquisite beauty; who, she believed, was a native of France. "Excepting her," said she, "I think my Lady Stavordale the handsomest lady my eyes ever saw; but she certainly bears away the bell even from her!" "Did you hear her name?" inquired Miss Tracey. "Yes," replied she; "the servants call her Mademoiselle d'Argneau." The name was familiar to Miss Tracey's ear; but it did not strike her that this could possibly be the person she had heard mentioned as Adonia's friend; and she told Lady Stavordale, as a piece of entertaining news, that they would meet the

the Duke of F. on Belle-Isle, accompanied by a frail countrywoman of hers, who the landlady informed her was still handsomer than Lady S. Adonia felt rather shocked than amused by this intelligence; but her curiosity, though of a different nature, was not inferior to Miss Tracey's; and, when they reached the island, she eagerly looked out for this fallen beauty; who, having taken the opposite direction of the beautiful serpentine walk, whose shadowing trees alternately shut out or give a more elegant finish to the opening landscapes, it was some time before she met.

They were scenes which nature in her most benificent mood seemed only to have designed for the haunts of happy innocence; and which fortune, as if to second her wishes, had rendered the abode of a pair not more distinguished by the possession of affluence, than by the right and benevolent application of it. And here,

here, in this favored spot, with a heart warmed by the beauties around her, and wholly uncongenial to every rude emotion, Adonia was shocked and agonized by discovering, in the gay companion of a titled libertine, her once-cherished friend and favorite companion, Mademoiselle d'Argneau. The meeting was for a moment equally embarrassing on both sides; but Mademoiselle d'Argneau soon recovered her nonchalance; and, while her heart was internally wrung by revived affection and momentary virtue, she hurried away from Adonia, gaily wishing her a good morning and all possible happiness, for that "she really was in a great hurry, and could not stay to tell her adventures at present." Her heart indeed was bitterly wrung; but it was a compunction which survived not the scene that produced it. Her errors were irretrievable! The original features of her heart had so long been defaced by vanity and levity, that she had heard without

anger

anger or surprise a seducer plead that her charms had induced him to lay aside his rank and character as a husband, and submit to the disguise of an adventurer, that he might win her love:—that, though his hand was linked with another's, his heart was devoted to her alone; and that, though he had deceived her as to his being unmarried, it should be the business of his life to convince her, that marriage was a form which could add nothing to the fervency and constancy of a love like his. But is it necessary to repeat the well-known arguments of the specious seducer? or their rapid influence over the female mind, unguarded by steadiness or principle? Mademoiselle d'Argneau fancied that she loved him; and that the sacrifices which he had made to obtain her demanded an equal sacrifice in return.—The sacrifice was her honor; and, the precious gem once lost, she was only studious to forget its value. She soon became as much a stranger to shame as to

virtue!

virtue !—Adonia turned from the picture with the bitterest anguish ; and learned, amid all her own happiness and innocence, that there is no stab the heart can receive more acute than the convicted unworthiness of a beloved object. The discovery for a while clouded and preyed upon her spirits ; but the object was irreclaimably lost to her ; and she strove to wean her heart from the recollected affection which embittered her regrets, by considering that the being who could so early, and so unblushingly, throw off the restraint of virtue, was less an object to deplore than to contemn.

During her absence in the North, Mr. Stanhope had undertaken the kind office of travelling into France, to announce her marriage to the Marquis d'Estreaux, and to demand the King's permission to conduct her brothers to England : and, on her return to Conway-castle, she had the happiness of embracing them ; and of seeing

seeing her beloved father restored to a degree of tranquillity and renovated health, which could only be the result of regained energy of mind and vanquished sufferings.—The Marquis was, indeed, at length the convert of sober reason.

Pain'd sense from fancy's tyranny
  Alone can set us free;
A thousand miseries we feel
  Till sunk in misery;

and this sentiment of the prolix and paradoxical, but amiable, Young, was never more strikingly exemplified than in him.—In affluence and prosperity, he had formerly smarted to agony beneath the slightest shock of sensibility. His visionary and high-wrought hopes, which were fostered by a false estimate of life, had embittered his disappointment: the delusion of fancy had prolonged and exaggerated his real griefs. A romantic and overstrained delicacy of sentiment had disgusted him with the general manners of the world, and taught him a pride in his

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own superiority, and a haughtiness of deportment, which were foreign from his nature.—This pride was vanquished by the deplorable state,—that most dreadful stage of human misery,—which had lowered his highly-prized endowments of taste and intellect beneath the standard of the commonest and coarsest mind; and he received the restored blessing of reason with humble thankfulness to heaven, and a deep sense of his own insufficiency.—The romantic and doating dreams of fancy, which magnified the disappointment of his first love into a misfortune important enough to render him careless of existence, and dead to every affection that was not linked with this, had been dispelled by the experience of almost every other species of misery which could convince him how greatly he had deceived himself in imagining that he had passed the highest point of real suffering. He had been branded as a traitor to his country,—severed from his family,—driven to attempt

attempt suicide,—and, finally, reduced to madness! He felt himself removed from all these horrors, acquitted by his conscience of the crime for which he was sentenced, saved from the guilt of self-murder, restored to his children, and surrounded by every rational blessing. With sentiments of gratitude and feelings of emancipation, which annexed impiety to the idea of looking back with murmuring on any past misfortune, his eyes had been forcibly and painfully opened to see the world as it is, not as his imagination had long coloured it; and he now regarded it as a scene of mingled good and evil; where the most wretched are not without some sources of comfort, nor the most worthless without some claims to pity or regard. That species of pride, which startles at the idea of receiving the obligations that are really conferred by affection, had always been unknown to him; and he continues to reside with his amiable daughter and son-in-law, with-

out once repining at a dependence which is rendered honorable to them by duty, and delightful by affection, happy in their society, and aiding by his advice and experience their schemes of benevolence; which, glowing with the unbounded generosity of youth, need sometimes to be restrained by the sober hand of prudence. The amiable and benevolent Mr. Stanhope became the tenant of a small, but elegant, villa in their immediate neighbourhood; where the softening hand of time, and the soothing attentions of friendship, have gradually worn away every trace of his former melancholy. Adonia and Ferdinand supply to him the family whom he has lost, and entirely fill his lately-vacant affections. His mind has recovered its native vigor, his spirits their native elasticity; and the plaintive solitary mourner is now the lively and intelligent companion; retaining only enough of the softness of affliction to render him interesting, and to give the

mellowing of sympathy to a systematic benevolence.

After some time given to the forms of a previous preference, which he conceived could not be abandoned at once, Lord Arunville, restored to health and animation, discovered that the object, who had pitied his hopeless passion and soothed his disappointment, had left her own image in his heart, in the room of that which her tender pity and soothing friendship had wiled away from him. He discovered that he loved Miss Fitzwilliam; and marked that

> The sickly cheek, that mantled hectic fires;
> The languid eye, that, notic'd, sought the ground;
> The soft withdrawing air of consciousness;
> And the deep sigh, ere fully uttered,
> Hush'd by bashful fear;

were all symptoms propitious to his newly-admitted wishes, and he solicited her hand. The gentle and unassuming Johanna was as ignorant of her own personal as mental charms.

charms. She had not once thought it possible that any one, who had loved a being so superior as she conceived her cousin, could transfer that love to her; and the discovery that she was really perferred by the only man who had ever engaged her partiality, nearly proved as fatal to her as the slow corroding anguish which had preyed upon her vivacity, and eaten away the roses of health from her cheek. She doubted the reality of her happiness; she thought herself unworthy of possessing the affection of such a man: and it was not till after much importunity, and many solemn assurances of the sincerity and fervor of his regard, that she could be persuaded that pity for her discovered weakness was not the chief motive which influenced his addresses, or could be prevailed upon to confess to him her love. Her affections were as enthusiastic and unchanging as they had been unobtrusive; her mind was as exalted as her manners were retired.

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In being united to Lord Arunville, she believed herself at the summit of earthly felicity; while he, in possessing her, found a tender wife and prudent friend; whose most anxious wishes were for his happiness, and whose superior equanimity of disposition, and steadiness of mind, restrained and meliorated the violence of his passion, and corrected the romantic errors of a distorted imagination. They reside chiefly in the neighbourhood of Conway-castle, which Lord and Lady Stavordale seldom ever quit; and, at such times, when business or necessary ceremony interfere to separate any of the members of these happy families from their favorite homes, to mingle in gayer or in more active scenes, it is but to return them with increased relish to the dear social circle where the harmony of friendship and kindred ties of soul constitute their best enjoyments;-and where their goodness and benificence render them a blessing to the country around. Ado-

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nia's circle of social happiness has lately received an addition in the occasional society of her first and much-esteemed friend, Miss Belmour; who married a gentleman of fortune near Winchester; and renewed, and now continues, that intimacy with Adonia which was formerly so advantageous to the latter, and so pleasing to herself.—Fanny Tracey, united to a man of sense and worth, who has corrected her foibles, and called forth the amiable dispositions of her heart, becomes a good wife and a respectable member of society. Her vivacity now enlivens without offending; and her coquetry and love of admiration are confined to the desire of pleasing an amiable husband, whose worth she venerates; and the excellent father, whose happiness is combined with her own. The Comte de l'Avignon, wading from crime to crime in the mazes of a desolating revolution; with ambition for his pilot, and power the object of his pursuit; was alternately the tyrannical ruler

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and the abject minion of a sanguinary faction, whose names will be for ever odious, and whose memory will only be preserved by the enormity of their crimes; till, detected in treachery to the party he had espoused, he was sacrificed to their revenge; and in a moment hurled from the zenith of perverted power to disgrace and death. With not a friend to sooth or lament him; with not one recollected good action to speak comfort to his distracted conscience; without any notions of religion but dark and confused images, which armed his Creator as an avenging and implacable judge, and represented a future state as a region of mysterious horrors; fell the Comte de l'Avignon! who had spent the greatest part of his life in the silken lap of luxury, and reveled in the security of unbounded gratification and remorseless guilt. The Marquis d'Estreaux still lives: he is an emigrant and a beggar, but not destitute nor friendless. The hand of her whom he would have consigned to the worthless De

l'Avignon

l'Avignon is raised to foster him. From Adonia he receives an asylum, and within the influence of her virtues, and impressed by her generosity, the haughty and ferocious tyrant of prosperity becomes the thankful pensioner of *her* bounty whom he once treated with such cruel rigor; though wounded pride and crushed ambition still fester in his bosom, and render the remembrance of that punishment burthensome which his corrected reason acknowledges to be just.—Immersed in licentious pleasures, and intoxicated by the admiration which her beauty every where attracted, Mademoiselle d'Argneau blazed a while in splendid infamy,—the wonder and pity of the good, and the envy or derision of the worthless, who courted the beauty whom they despised, and secretly derided the folly which they flattered. After a lapse of two years, her father emigrated to England, to fly from the disturbances which ravaged his native country. Sparkling in the gaudy trappings of shameless frailty,

frailty, he discovered his lost daughter; and challenged her seducer. They fought. —The father was the victim; and the unhappy Mademoiselle d'Argneau too late opened her eyes on remorse and misery. She was reclaimed to virtue by seeing her father die by the hand of her libertine-seducer; and, in the full bloom of youth and beauty, she now drags on a wretched life of penitence, in a retirement where, unknown and unpitied, the gay, the admired, the high-born, Mademoiselle d'Argneau finds beauty no longer a consolation, nor youth a season of hope. That retirement the virtuous Adonia would fain penetrate, and pour the soothing balm of pity and of friendship into the bosom of the unhappy Magdalen; but hitherto her search has been unsuccessful; and she beholds, in the fate of a woman so capable by nature of earning that fame which she has forfeited, a striking example of the insufficiency of possessing eminent beauty, or eminent talents, without the less dazzling accompaniments of prudence

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and early-cultured principle. Lord Stavordale was saved from any painful litigation, that might have arisen after the death of his grandfather, by the recovery of those papers which authenticate the legality of his rights. Fortune has hitherto continued his happiness undisturbed: and, if minds unrelaxed by prosperity, and steady in the discharge of every duty to which humanity is enjoined, could entitle any one to build on the promises of unalloyed earthly felicity, *Ferdinand* and *Adonia* might lay claim to it with confidence. But, too feelingly convinced, by the experience of their past lives, of the uncertainty of all sublunary possessions; and too sensible, amid all their exertions in the cause of virtue, of the weakness and imperfection of human nature to be confident or vain; they receive the continuance of their good fortune with humble gratitude to heaven; and enjoy it with a moderation and diffidence becoming beings who are subordinate to a higher Power.

FINIS.

T. Plummer, Printer, Seething-Lane.

ERRATA TO VOL. IV.

Page 13, line 18, *for* was *read* were.
17,—— 7,——feelings *read* feeling.
37,——19,——desolate *read* disconsolate.
95,—— 1,——minutes alternately in contemplating, *read* minutes in contemplating alternately.
100,——20,——the *read* a.
115,——16,——confidence *read* conference.
140,——10,——look *read* looks.
168,—— 4,——was *read* saw.
171,—— 2,——*insert* from *after the word* absence.
180,—— 8, & 9, *for* all-timid *read* ill-timed.
198,——11, & 12,——in *read* by.
225,——16, *dele* neither.
246,——11, *for* woman *read* women.